DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 474 701 PS 031 148

AUTHOR	Lowe, Elaine, Ed.
TITLE	Research Connections Canada: Supporting Children and Families, Number 8.
INSTITUTION	Canadian Child Care Federation, Ottawa (Ontario).
SPONS AGENCY	Human Resources Development Canada, Ottawa (Ontario).
ISSN	ISSN-1488-1160
PUB DATE	2002-00-00
NOTE	98p.; For other issues in series, see PS 031 141-49.
AVAILABLE FROM	Canadian Child Care Federation, 383 Parkdale, Suite 201, Ottawa (Ontario) K1Y 4R4, Canada. Tel: 800-858-1412 (Toll Free); Tel: 613-729-5289; Fax: 613-729-3159; e-mail: orders@cccf-fcsge.ca; Web site: http://www.cccf-fcsge.ca.
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses (070) -- Reference Materials - Bibliographies (131)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS
DESCRIPTORS	*Action Research; Caregiver Role; *Child Care; Child Caregivers; Child Development; *Evaluation Methods; *Family Child Care; *Family Support; Foreign Countries; *Inquiry; Research Methodology
IDENTIFIERS	Canada; Historical Background; Learning Communities; Program Characteristics

ABSTRACT

Serving as a vehicle for raising the profile of and thereby gaining recognition for the important research and development work being conducted in Canada in support of children and families, the "Research Connections Canada" series compiles research and/or development papers as well as background papers, analytical literature reviews, and essays. This issue of the series focuses on inquiry approaches for evaluating child care. The articles are as follows: (1) "Action Research as an Inquiry Approach Suitable for Child Care Communities: Literature Review" (Diana Nicholson and Frances Ricks), conducted to inform the creation of professional development training in participatory forms of inquiry into parent and community child care perceptions; (2) "Exploring Inquiry Approaches for Child Care Communities: Annotated Bibliography" (Diana Nicholson and Frances Ricks), presenting 46 sources reflecting knowledge in the areas of action research and cooperative inquiry, learning communities and communities of practice, and organizational learning and learning organizations; (3) "Theories and Assumptions in Child Development" (Judith Bernhard), exploring the role of cultural context in child development and three theoretical approaches-dominance, development is contextual, and multiple paths of "normal" development; (4) "Contradictory Constructions of the Family Child Care Provider's Role: An Overview of the Ontario Experience" (Irene Kyle), on the difficult transition in role from "day care mother" to "family child care professional"; and (5) "Understanding Family Support Programs" (Suzanne Smythe), addressing five common questions about family support programs and how they work. All of the papers contain references. (HTH)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 474 701

8

Research Connections

CANADA

Supporting Children and Families

PS 031148

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Gaetane Huot

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

8

Research Connections

C A N A D A

Supporting Children and Families

Research Connections Canada features research and development projects in support of children and families.

Published by the Canadian Child Care Federation with financial support from Social Development Partnerships, Human Resources Development Canada.

© 2002 CCCF

ISSN 1488-1160

Published by the Canadian Child Care Federation

Project Manager: Anne Maxwell

Editor: Elaine Lowe

Design/Layout: Fairmont House Design

Printing: St. Joseph Print Group

Research Connections Canada: Supporting Children and Families

Research Connections Canada is a bilingual publication series published by the Canadian Child Care Federation and funded by Social Development Partnerships, Human Resources Development Canada. The series is an anthology of current Canadian early childhood research and development papers.

This professional publication serves as a vehicle for raising the profile of and thereby gaining recognition for the important research and development work which is being conducted currently in Canada, including that being done with funding from Social Development Partnerships, Human Resources Development Canada.

Research Connections Canada includes research and/or development papers as well as background papers, analytical literature reviews and essays. This publication series is of particular interest to training programs (at both college and university levels), academics, researchers, policy makers and licensing and regulatory agencies.

Tthe papers in *Research Connections Canada* represent the opinions of the authors and should not be considered to reflect the opinions of the publisher or the funder. Papers are presented essentially as submitted by the authors; there is no substantive edit or fact-checking. There is currently no peer-review process.

One copy of each issue of the series is distributed free-of-charge to an identified distribution network including: libraries in colleges and universities that offer training in early childhood care and education; government child care departments; national organizations in the health and social services sector; and provincial/ territorial organizations with a focus on early childhood.

Feedback or inquiries should be directed to Anne Maxwell, Director of Information Services, Canadian Child Care Federation, 201-383 Parkdale Avenue, Ottawa, ON, K1Y 4R4. Email amaxwell@cccf-fcsge.ca.

Table of Contents

Action Research as an Inquiry Approach Suitable for Child Care Communities: Literature Review 5
by Diana Nicholson and Frances Ricks

- Finding an Appropriate Pathway to Inquiry 6
- Relationship Work in Action Research 8
- Change Through Inquiry 11
- Moving Towards Mindful Learning 13
- Co-Creating Knowledge 14
- Creating a "Learning Community" and Launching Participatory Learning Projects 15
- Potential Challenges Associated with Action Research 23
- Working with Challenges 28
- Conclusion 28

Exploring Inquiry Approaches for Child Care Communities: Annotated Bibliography 39
by Diana Nicholson and Frances Ricks

- Describing Action Research/Cooperative Inquiry 40
- Learning Communities/Communities of Practice 49
- Organizational Learning/Learning Organizations 52
- Other Key Resources 53

Theories and Assumptions in Child Development 57
by Judith Bernhard

- Principle 1: Dominance 59
- Principle 2: Development is Contextual 62
- Principle 3: Multiple Paths of "Normal" Development 62

Contradictory Constructions of the Family Child Care Provider's Role: An Overview of the Ontario Experience 66
by Irene Kyle

- The Dominant Construction: The Agency-Child Welfare Model 67
- The Challenge of Unionization and Pay Equity 69
- The Marginalized Majority: Independent Providers 73

Understanding Family Support Programs 77
by Suzanne Smythe

- What is a family support program? 77
- How do family support programs work with families and parents? 82
- How do family support programs work with children? 85
- How do family support programs work with communities? 88
- How do family support programs promote quality in their work? 91

Action Research as an Inquiry Approach Suitable for Child Care Communities

Literature Review

by Diana Nicholson and Frances Ricks

Diana Nicholson is research coordinator for the Participatory Inquiry section of the Canadian Child Care Federation initiative funded by Human Resources Development Canada and works through the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria.

Frances Ricks is the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies at the University of Victoria and a professor in the School of Child and Youth Care. She is one of the principle investigators on the Canadian Child Care Federation initiative funded by Human Resources Development Canada, for the Participatory Inquiry section and consults on the Ethics Training section.

Background

This literature review was conducted to inform the creation of professional development training in participatory forms of inquiry that could enable child care practitioners to create learning communities. Other resource materials developed for child care practitioners in Canada have described the importance of relationships and forming partnerships within child care communities.[1] Additional information is needed, however, to support child care practitioners in facilitating participatory learning projects within their communities.

Participatory learning projects involve gathering research-based data on what parents and community members actually think about child care, their perceptions, assumptions, potential biases, hopes, fears and suggestions for practice. Mutual learning in child care communities should extend to effecting positive changes in child care practice. Child care practitioners will require special facilitation skills to create, maintain and sustain the involvement of community in defining, implementing and evaluating child care quality. The data produced through community projects will contribute valuable insights relevant to promoting quality early childhood development, learning and care services for the optimal development of young children.

The proposed training is expected to include practical tools, techniques and processes to enable child care practitioners to work with and engage all the "partners in quality."[2] This review and the proposed training are intended to support child care practitioners working within a model of community dialogue and involvement.

Introduction

This review includes literature citations from the United Kingdom, Canada, The Hague, Australia, the United States and Israel. While many of the authors write from their position as academics and researchers, a significant contribution to the literature has been made recently by educators;[3] other professional groups;[4] partnerships between researchers and practitioners,[5] and post-graduate students writing about their own initiation and facilitation of, and participation in inquiry groups.[6] Additionally, professional consultants are writing about their experiences facilitating inquiry processes.[7]

The literature employs a variety of terms to describe participatory inquiry processes. For example, articles reviewed refer to teacher research, reflective practice, learning organizations, action learning, action research, participative inquiry, collaborative inquiry, cooperative inquiry, communities of practice, learning communities and communities of inquiry as forms of participatory inquiry. The purpose of this review is not to define the specific nuances of each of these approaches, but rather to outline what appears within the literature that could inform the development of training for child care practitioners to facilitate participatory learning projects.

In this review, we build an argument for focusing on a "pathway" to inquiry over choosing a particular methodology. We highlight why an action research approach is an appropriate fit for participatory learning projects in child care communities. We describe how learning communities are created and how participatory learning projects are launched. Finally, we outline the potential challenges associated with an action research approach and suggest reasons for accepting these challenges as opposed to working to overcome them. We conclude with the ways in which the literature review has informed the development of the proposed training.

Finding an Appropriate Pathway to Inquiry

There is a great deal of literature that outlines steps involved in conducting qualitative and quantitative research[8] and the steps involved in conducting program evaluations.[9] It seemed tempting, at first, to simply borrow the best bits and pieces from various sources and

compile a new and improved guide to conducting participatory program evaluation that could be used for training purposes. However, these resources, while outlining steps and features of participatory research, describe less fully the processes of creating a community of learners and engaging, maintaining and sustaining inquiry within a learning community. Insights into these processes are critical for developing training that will respond to the professional/practice and community development needs of child care communities.

Training is best approached, not as a path that ensures arrival at a specified outcome, but rather as participating in "continuous tinkering, laying down the path as we walk."[10] Thinking of a pathway to inquiry prompts one to visualize the ground being walked upon. As a starting point for inquiry, we felt that the ground for child care practice needed to be represented in the ground for inquiry.[10] Others agree that the chosen approach to inquiry for change needs to reflect the principles and values of the practice community.[11]

The Ethic of Care Reflected in Action Research

A strong ethic of care exists in child care practice. An ethic of care recognizes the needs and interests of everyone in a relationship network, including the self[12] and reflects a perspective of morality that is concerned with preserving relationships.[13] Gregory suggests six virtues that are elemental to an ethic of care: acquaintance; mindfulness; moral imagining; solidarity; tolerance; and self-care.[14] The behaviours associated with caring virtues include "noticing, imagining, communicating with others, inquiring into and articulating the needs and interests of others, imagining the peculiar desires of others as belonging to ourselves and broadening our exposure to human experience."[15] Through the practice of these behaviours, practical, cooperative social improvement emerges. These important features of child care communities will be sustained using an approach to inquiry that is democratic, empowering and preserves the relationships of the people involved.[16] Action research offers such an approach.

An action research approach "celebrates personal expressiveness, emotionality and empathy, values individual uniqueness and cherishes each person's dignity, race and courage."[17] An ethic of caring emerges in the action research process through holding in high regard the different ways of knowing and understanding that individuals bring to situations. Through involving participants in setting the research parameters, doing the analysis, drawing the conclusions, planning implementation, and evaluating progress, action research becomes liberating in its effects.[18]

Exploring multiple perspectives can help people to care about each other for the first time. This can be particularly enhanced with regard to feelings about peers from different ethnic or philosophical backgrounds.[19] Gregory echoes Calderon's findings in stating that through

shared inquiry, people are able to see others in their suffering – people come to care for each other when their individual reality becomes a possibility for one another.[20]

Reason and Bradbury acknowledge the importance of relationships in all forms of inquiry: "Our world does not consist of separate things but of relationships which we co-author."[21] Stringer agrees that a participatory approach acknowledges that the "web of intersubjective relations among people that makes possible freedom, harmony, and mutual dependence."[22] Through sharing personal stories and disclosing feelings, relationships are built and nurtured and these relationships are essential to effective cooperative inquiry.[23]

The preservation of interpersonal relationships in a learning community can extend to benefit the development of the larger community.[24] Stringer articulates some of the reasons why action research is capable of fostering community development:

- it enables the participation of all people;
- it acknowledges people's equality of worth;
- it provides freedom from oppressive, debilitating conditions; and
- it enables the expression of people's full human potential.[25]

Interpersonal relationships are the focus of the caring ethic in child care practice and the foundation for group processes in an action research approach to inquiry. However, the literature points clearly to a variety of issues related to the preservation of relationships. We will now turn to these issues and the ways in which they are addressed in action research.

Relationship Work in Action Research

The qualities of love, wonder, humility and compassion guide group processes in learning organizations. Love is present when people are accepted as legitimate beings that are not required to strive towards homogeneity. Wonder prevails when problems arise and they are perceived to be normal "manifestations of the world," rather than frustrating breakdowns necessitating responsibility and blame. Learning communities exhibit humility in recognizing opportunities for and readiness to improve. Compassion is reflected by recognizing that perplexing behaviours arise from varied but equally valid viewpoints and forces.[26]

Others, writing about action research, characterize relationship work similarly to Senge (above). The action research process serves to equalize power and control, attend to the needs of participants, and promote tolerance for different perspectives and respect for different ways of knowing. We will look at each of these characteristics in turn.

Equalizing Power and Control Through Acknowledging Interests and Ensuring all Voices are Heard

The action research process contributes to more equitable and sustainable relationships.[27] Through engaging people in a process that allows them to co-create knowledge, power differentials can be reduced and more people can be enabled to participate more fully in their communities.[28]

Barrett and Taylor describe how their cooperative inquiry group balanced authority-power through emphasizing the knowledge-power that individuals brought to the group. Power differentials were minimized through mutual sharing, integrating perspectives, nurturing, letting go, being responsible for oneself and for the growth that grew out of reflection. Through the process of action research, multiple voices and perspectives are considered equally, the influences of power are uncovered and addressed and, in so doing, more democratic forms of knowledge are able to emerge.[29]

While tolerance and willingness to embrace different perspectives fuel the inquiry process, in group inquiries, power differentials can result in dismissal or silencing of some voices. In many groups, the perspectives of "reality" that are most likely to be voiced and maintained are usually those of people who possess power within a group. Douglas articulates the difficulties that people in her inquiry group experienced with power. Experiences with domination, exclusion or disadvantage are more likely to be acted out within a group than they are to be explicitly expressed. Exploration of behaviours within a group can help to reveal underlying issues.[30]

Tolerance for Divergent Perspectives Heightens Compassion

In order to engage a community in inquiry, the approach to inquiry must be respectful of divergent perspectives and experiences. While the existence of various perspectives within a learning community facilitates inquiry, working with divergent perspectives and experiences requires tolerance. Tolerance creates a space in which ideas can emerge and be acquired by others.[31]

The importance of integrating the varied perspectives and experiences that individuals bring to a community is stressed in action research. Stringer refers to individual perspectives as constituting constructions of truth or reality. Action research enables different perspectives to be shared and through questioning assumptions and beliefs, validates individual experiences while also striving to effect mutual sense-making.[32] Cook describes the work of integrating perspectives in the action research process as "flickering between the suspected and the known" through "allowing unconscious thoughts to materialize" and ideas to "crystallize" and "dissolve," "crystallize and dissolve."[33]

Winter asserts that:

> "Other people's thinking, based on their experience, is a key resource in enabling us to think creatively about our own, to think critically about the thoughts we started with in order to construct a new cognitive space, into which we might, provisionally, decide to move."[34]

The construct of imagination can be useful in trying to capture the sense of openness that a community of inquiry needs to create in order to integrate perspectives and facilitate learning. Imagination represents inventiveness, and creative, original and insightful thought.[35] It is the "faculty that envisages possibilities."[36] Dadds describes imagination as being able to see a possibility, something that does not yet exist in reality.[37] Through disrupting and examining epistemological theories and paradigms, new possibilities and new meaning can be discovered.[38]

Critical friends can provide much needed support to help people in inquiry confront their own thinking.[39]

Acceptance of "Not Knowing" and Respect for Varied Ways of Knowing

Related to issues of power and control is the question of what groups do with different levels of knowledge and expressive abilities that participants bring with them to an inquiry group. Mumford contends that learning is substantially different than being taught; it is about striving to challenge the familiar and the status quo and exist within the space of the unfamiliar.[40]

In inquiry, people need to recognize and accept that their experience and knowledge is of their own construction.[41] Once this is done, they can move towards inquiring into what it is that is not known. Through the circle of sharing experience and understanding, participants use their existing knowledge to learn new things and their old knowledge is reshaped by newly acquired understandings.[42] Langer also stresses the importance of recognizing what we do not know: "How can we know if we do not ask? Why should we ask if we are certain we know? All answers come out of the question."[43] Thompson states: "One will only see what one is ready to see, one will only learn what is on the edge of consciousness of what one already knows."[44]

Ryan describes an example of a cooperative inquiry group that benefited greatly from the inclusion of a new teacher who posed naive questions about practice to the group.[45] Thus providing a stimulus for critiquing practice that would not likely have occurred if the group consisted solely of experienced teachers. What had become familiar to the experienced teachers was not examined carefully. The fresh perspective of "not knowing" prompted

the group to look at their contrasting perspectives and nurture new insights into their practice. Douglas states that the action research process, through allowing people to be co-researchers, co-subjects and co-learners facilitates a safe space in which it is okay to do things wrong.[46]

In addition to accepting a stance of "not knowing," most action researchers acknowledge different ways of knowing and expressing knowledge: experiential, presentational, propositional and practical.[47]

- *Experiential* knowing is gained through face-to-face encounters with other people, places or things; it is knowing through empathy and resonance – almost impossible to put into words.
- *Presentational* knowing emerges through experiential knowing and provides its expression through forms of imagery such as dance, poetry, drawing, sculpture or stories.
- *Propositional* knowing is knowing about something through ideas and theories and is expressed in abstract language or mathematics.
- *Practical* knowledge is "knowing how to do something" and is expressed in a skill, knack or competence.[48]

Practical knowing can transcend verbal description, yet it is an inherent part of action and is directly related to quality of practice. Practitioners can communicate tacit knowledge to one another by referring to aspects of their work that don't seem right or feel right and stresses that these references refer to something distinct to cognitive knowledge.[49] In the cycles of reflection and action in which action research and cooperative inquiry groups engage, each of the different ways of knowing is acknowledged and accepted. This helps participants to relax and feel confident that they can approach the inquiry in a way that will work for them.[50]

Change Through Inquiry

While action research appears to offer a pathway to inquiry that is consistent with the ethic of care in child care practice, inquiry within child care communities needs to respond to the goal of improving practice. In this section, we will describe how change occurs through the process of inquiry.[51]

Through developing and understanding practice, action research enables continuous learning that informs action[52] and improves the situation in which practice takes place.[53] Mellett asserts that the guiding question, *How can I improve?*, provides the impetus for inquiry and action in learning communities.[54] Thus, change takes place, not only after research is completed, but also through the process of doing research.

In action research processes, practitioners are helped to link their daily experiences to conceptual practice.[55] Heron emphasizes that the potential for learning increases when our inquiry focuses on changing practice rather than simply inquiring into it.[56] A focus on inquiry involves questioning beliefs, assumptions and certainties.[57] In learning communities, what people know is less important than what they can learn and penetrating questions are valued above simple answers.[58] Further, when inquiry interests emerge from within a learning community, they have immediate value and are more easily integrated into professional practice.[59]

Transformation of practice can occur when individuals come together to "refine explicit statements of the common values, norms and beliefs of the culture" through shared reflection, action, and employing all forms of knowing.[60] Practitioners need a forum to ask themselves about the value assumptions that underlie their practice in order to see whether they fit with their own declared values.[61] Through dialogue involving collaborative reflection and by developing common tools, language, images, roles, assumptions, and understandings, inquiry facilitates improvements in practice.[62] "It is not what the vision *is*, but what the vision *does* that matters."[63]

Through repeating cycles of reflection and action, action research allows participants to move beyond simply becoming *aware* of what they do to being able to *change* their practice.[64] Through reflection and action, participants are practising and learning *about* and *through* their practice.[65] Action research "seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities."[66]

Fischer et al provide an example of personal transformation that occurred through an inside-out approach to producing knowledge about practice. Teachers learned to incorporate reflection into their teaching practice – something they had not done in the past because, they explained, they were too busy teaching. They found that their way of looking at children and at themselves had changed. Their teaching methodologies and styles of curriculum delivery were transformed, they felt more confident in talking about the needs of teachers and students and they began to push against established practices in order to allow positive changes to occur.[67]

In efforts to effect change in practice, Maguire recommends that people begin with where the world is, not where they want it to be, in other words, to focus on the "near environment." The process of changing the environment is integrated into the process of studying it.[68] The posing of regular questions, not the search for definitive answers,

is the means by which practice is advanced.[69] Charles and Glennie note that the dynamics that exist in practice will often surface within an inquiry group. Thus, the learning that occurs within the inquiry group focuses on identifying the need for changes and implementing them in practice.[70] The social reference provided by a learning community is necessary for building practical knowledge.[71] Thus, in order to become a community, people must base their inquiries on participatory approaches. And in order to inquire in a deep and meaningful way, people must come together in community. The learning potential that exists within learning communities exceeds that which can be derived from individualized efforts.[72] Yanow agrees that the "collective, interactive and social dimensions of learning … cannot be reduced to whatever individual members learn and know."[73]

Learning to transform general questions into action research questions helps to ground the focus of inquiry in action. Mellett provides an example of transforming a question in order to shift the focus to one's own involvement, potential for action, relationship to others and positive effects for beneficiaries:

- General question: What is the nature of the attitude that educational researchers have for each others' work? Is the way they treat each other conducive to making educational research a force for the good?
- Action research question: How can I explore, identify, and use the insights of others, whose value systems I do not share, to improve the sense of community and commonality of purpose among all people working within the field of educational research?[74]

In participatory inquiry, participants strive to acquire a new "habit of mind" that is both more attentive and more tentative.[75] When mindfulness is combined with a commitment to co-creating knowledge with others, people experience transformation.

Moving Towards Mindful Learning

Learning is a complex phenomenon, not simply a sequence of actions. The goal of learning should be action, not optimal knowledge and the goal of curriculum should be to uncover what is possible rather than what is ideal.[76]

Learning arises through the combination of performance and practice – most organizations ask people to perform without providing opportunities for people to practice.[77] Opportunities to play facilitate learning because play provides a place where it is safe to experiment and reflect. Playing with making decisions in "slow" versus "fast" time can reveal how time can enable reflection, influence ways of interacting and impede effective decision-making. In

learning, process and content are inseparable. For example, overcoming fragmented policies and practices requires correcting fragmented relationships among the people involved.

Mumford states that reflection is critical to "unfreezing" previous learning. In order to understand how things can change, people must begin with understanding how they perceive the world and how their conceptions are formed.[78] Thus, learning focuses not just on practical problems, but also on one's own learning processes and personal development. Bunning suggests that individual reflection and challenging questions combine with the "synergic creativity of the group" to produce learning.[79]

Langer adds that relevance is very important to learning. The personal relevance engendered by being fully involved in the inquiry process removes the need for practitioners to memorize things. Being aware of different perspectives and being able to see more sides of an issue or subject increase interest, attention and provide material for drawing distinctions which in turn contribute to mindful learning.[80] While most teaching approaches ask the learner to accept information as true despite variations in context, the process of learning engendered by action research and cooperative inquiry approaches demands contextual responsivity. Mindful learning involves the continuous creation of new categories in which to frame understanding, openness to new information and an implicit awareness of multiple perspectives.[81]

Co-Creating Knowledge

At the foundation of action research is a particular perspective on knowledge, where it resides and how it is created. Action research challenges the view that knowledge is a valuable, pre-produced product and that such knowledge can be learned in one environment and easily transferred to another.[82] It recognizes that everyone has a role in defining knowledge and social reality.[83] It involves a process in which people are assisted to extend their own understanding of situations in order to resolve problems that they deem to be important.[84]

Action research is concerned with the meaning which people give to their experiences and it is this sharing of experience and meaning that is deemed "knowledge" relevant to the purposes of the group and its inquiry. It reflects a recognition that human knowledge is created in relationship.[85] Mellett contends that examined personal experience constitutes the "greatest resource available for the growth of practical theory and wisdom."[86] Accounts of good action research "claim to know their own form of life" ... while linking "their own lives with the lives of others in order to bring about an improvement that is life-enhancing and life-affirming."[87]

Creating a "Learning Community" and Launching Participatory Learning Projects

The first steps in creating a learning community involve bringing people together to determine a focus for the inquiry, group membership and meeting format. Early on, groups often begin to determine the group processes that will guide their collective inquiry.

Bringing People Together

There can be many reasons to engage in a learning project in a child care community. The literature contains descriptions of numerous participatory learning projects reflecting diverse interests. The focus of their initial meetings, the issues related to determining group membership and the time allotted for their inquiry are also detailed. Some examples are provided below.

Coming together for the first time

The impetus for creating a cooperative inquiry group usually arises out of a desire for change. An external facilitator can be hired to form a group to explore an issue of interest to management, a practitioner might identify a question within their practice that they wish to investigate collaboratively with other practitioners, an individual within a community may choose to bring people together to explore their common interests and determine ways in which they might inquire collaboratively to enhance the cohesiveness of the group and the learning and development of individuals within the community. Examples from the literature include:

- gaining insight into systemic barriers to effective practice;[88]
- furthering understanding of the experiences of young women in management through linking feminist inquiry with action research;[89]
- shifting power balances, deconstructing discriminatory systems and designing more equal and beneficial ways for people to relate through exploring the survival strategies of Black women managers;[90]
- exploring how to achieve attitudinal shifts in employees as required by mandated changes within an organization;[91]
- investigating ways in which professional confidence in science assessment could be restored and enhanced;[92]
- helping students in a management course to attend to the questions of meaning, value and spirit in deep ecology;[93]

- exploring the development of social welfare practice within a context of competing demands from legislation, policy and management;[94]
- providing an opportunity for teenage girls to work with choices they were making in their lives.[95]
- extending program evaluation to include consideration of the impact of programs on people's pride and feelings of worth, their dignity and feelings of autonomy, independence and competence; how programs affirm social identities; people's feelings of control over resources, decisions, actions, events and activities.[96]

At the base of all these examples is an underlying desire to learn. Once people have come together, they begin the process of inquiring in a cooperative manner. The inquiry usually begins with determining the focus of the first meetings.

Focus of initial meetings

Barrett and Taylor describe their initial meetings as a time to explore interests and develop relationships.[97] Douglas'group of Black women managers reported discovering their similarities and experiencing connectedness and empathy in their first group meeting. They moved to explore difference, and how to challenge and negotiate power in their second group meeting.[98] Baldwin, an external facilitator hired for a cooperative inquiry group, outlined his group's first steps as determining the focus of the inquiry and establishing ground rules for group engagement.[99] McArdle describes modeling how the group could work together, making a space to meet each other, discussing basic methods for the inquiry and sharing feelings about why and how the inquiry could be interesting in her group's first session.[100] McArdle's group also chose to emphasize the importance of allowing everyone's voices and paying attention to the language they used. In their group's early sessions, Fischer et al focused on sharing experiences and developing a common vocabulary for discussing practice habits.[101] Winter describes first meetings as a reconnaissance period in which conflicting interpretations of reality are worked through.[102]

Determining group membership

Baldwin contends that critical mass for inquiry groups is usually founded upon commitment rather than the number of members. Inquiry groups need to tackle the issue of closed versus open membership.[103] Groups may desire open membership but also struggle with fearing a loss of closeness, cohesion and identity if new members are permitted.[104] Working through membership issues can help groups to reflect upon and formalize the principles that underpin their group processes and functions.[105] Some groups may decide early on that

group membership needs to close in order to allow the group to progress and build upon their learning without having to revisit the basics as would be required by admitting new members.[106]

Format: Length of meetings, duration of inquiry period

The meeting arrangements chosen by an inquiry group can vary widely. The length and frequency of meetings will depend on the purpose and focus of the inquiry and the availability of group members. Some groups meet over longer periods of time. For example, Barrett and Taylor were part of an inquiry community that held 30 meetings over a one and a half year period.[107] After engaging in six months of negotiation and recruitment efforts, Charles and Glennie launched an inquiry with select participants from a large group of volunteers that lasted just 10 days.[108] Calderon combined weekly 45-minute sessions with 2-hour monthly sessions and a week-long summer institute.[109] The group of teachers in Fischer et al met weekly for four months for the purpose of sharing, questioning and challenging each other on their classroom inquiry projects.[110]

Determining Group Processes

Action research in learning communities is usually characterized by cycles of reflection and action in which information is gathered (data collection), analysed (reflection and interpretation or analysis), and emerging learning incorporated into practice (action). Learning communities will become familiar with the iterative process of reflection and action. Other process issues to be determined by the group include group facilitation, consideration of individual skills and discussing means for ending the group.

Engaging in cycles of reflection and action

Wesley and Buysse suggest that making reflection a shared value in practice is key to creating a learning community.[111] Different forms of reflective practice can be employed to respond to differing interests.[112] Interests can be technical in nature (rule-governed aspects of practice), personal (connecting personal experiences to practice to facilitate explanation) or problematic and critical (a movement to rethink practice and to reconsider fundamental goals, theory and beliefs). Forms of reflective practice include:

- *spontaneity*: reflection that happens "out of the blue"
- *replay and rehearsal*: reflection that involves identifying and explaining events
- *introspection*: looking into an event to further explain and go beyond the first level of explanation
- *enquiry*: planning, acting, observing and reflecting with an intention to change practice [113]

Through reflection, people can become more aware of how they perceive the world, how they form conceptions and how they can change.[114] Reflection enables workers to look at the assumptions, prejudice and routine aspects associated with their practice.[115] In learning communities, individual experiences within the group should be solicited through posing questions. Through doing so, the group can attend to their own processes.[116] Learning how others are experiencing the group situation is critical to supporting people's participation.[117]

Heron contends that the process of reflection enables people to access inner keys to effective action. While skills can be described up to a point, they exist beyond conceptual formulation and defy full description using language. Thus, if we rely only on propositional knowledge, it will not be possible to learn about or know the full extent of what happens in practice. During reflection, practitioners often express how difficult it can be to think about and express what they do in practice.[118] The role of tacit knowledge in practice can be revealed through reflection.[119] Maughan and Reason add that most people find it very difficult to practice reflection at work. However, in our busy work worlds, practising reflection helps us to be fully present and engaged in the moment.[120]

Gathering information and determining its validity

Each inquiry group will need to decide for themselves how they go about collecting the evidence of their reflections and their practice. Data gathering involves finding information that will test original thinking and participants are seen as creative partners in their own thinking.[121] One's own thinking and the initial inquiry framework should be included in the data to be gathered and analyzed.[122] Pursuing an understanding of the numerous data collection and analysis methods can help learning communities select strategies and approaches that best fit the needs of their particular learning project. The information gathering processes of recording, journaling and narrative writing are described briefly below, followed by consideration of validity issues in action research.

Audio-recording and transcribing meetings can provide the group with physical evidence of their efforts,[123] enable group feedback on themes of their discussions,[124] provide a vehicle for engaging in dialogue about value positions[125] and mirror the process of action and reflection.[126]

In Douglas'cooperative inquiry group, journaling and therapy were used to create spaces for reflection and mutual sense-making. Individuals brought their journal reflections to the group in order to share what they did in and between meetings.[127] The teachers in Ryan's action research group wrote their classroom observations in journals which used as a basis for group discussion that focused on probing into practice perspectives.[128] Teachers in

Fischer's group combined classroom observations with review of teacher and student journals. Journals helped to forge a clear focus, articulate the questions being researched and to confirm the sources of and evaluate the evidence being used.[129]

Lavell cautions, however, that the action research process' reliance on journaling is problematic for First Nations people. She asserts that journal writing is likely to be regarded as not only unfamiliar and unpractical, but also extremely loathsome. Alternative data collection methods need to be considered when working with aboriginal people who possess a long history of practising and perfecting methods of transmitting knowledge that do not rely upon written words.[130]

Another form of journaling is writing narratives. Narratives can be used to promote new understandings and theories by investigating the ways in which they reflect cultural, historical and social influences.[131]

In action research, varied sources of evidence are often combined. Green describes using taped tutorials with her supervisor, a personal diary, her personal responses to the literature, her reflections on conversations with critical friends and regular correspondence with critical friends as constituting sources of evidence in her action research inquiry into her own practice.[132]

The question of validity of information or evidence gathered through the action research process is the subject of discussion in the literature. Stringer notes that in naturalistic forms of inquiry, trustworthiness of evidence is the appropriate consideration of validity. Trustworthiness includes attention to credibility, transferability and dependability.[133] Dadds suggests that "democratic validity" is the appropriate framework for judging the quality of evidence obtained in practitioner research. Validation should be less concerned with "powerful ultimate judgement" and more concerned with "reflective exploration of worthwhileness as viewed from several exchanged positions of interests."[134] Winter contends that the question of accuracy in information gathering should be replaced by a question that focuses on facilitating the process in such a way that it allows all parties to have a voice and to realize what it is that is not yet understood. Further, any discussion of procedural validity should focus on following a justifiable process, not on achieving correct outcomes.[135] On the other hand, there may be times in a learning project when one needs to consider surveys or outcome measures as reliable, valid and generalizable.

Analyzing the information

Data analysis should focus on thinking creatively about the information that has been gathered. In order to avoid moving in a circle, confirming what was already known,

analysis needs to prompt new perceptions.[136] In learning communities, people bring a great deal of knowledge with them, and thus, it can be challenging to avoid using prior categories to classify data. However, if prior categories are relied upon, people end up not knowing much more than when they started the inquiry. Winter suggests "stepping back" from actions in order to "get them in view."[137] This can be accomplished by placing data from specific situations "within a wider social context, looking for tensions and contradictions in the data and considering how these contradictions may both reflect the history of the situation and may also be symptomatic of possible changes in the future."[138] It is here that theory and practice are inextricably linked. Winter stresses that theory does not exist as a body of literature, but is created by practitioners as "they engage in the on-going critical debate about the meaning of experience through which bodies of knowledge are continuously changing."[139] Thinking involves finding an individual voice, understanding oneself in relation to one's culture and thinking in dialogue with others.

Stringer focuses on the interpretive role in data analysis. Interpretation builds on description through using definitions and frameworks of meaning to enable participants to make better sense of their experiences. Taken-for-granted meanings are reformulated by expanding and elaborating on their construction. Interpretive work is aided when individuals in a learning community strive to take the perspective of others. Asking questions like why?, what?, how?, who?, where?, and when? can help people to get at the complexity of issues and experiences. Developing concept maps can help to outline in graphic form the elements of a situation.[140]

Facilitation

The effectiveness of inquiry rests strongly on a group's process skills and a willingness to stay in inquiry. Facilitation is key to effective inquiry and can be achieved through a variety of means. Other skills are also important, and group members will vary in the level of skill that they bring with them to the learning group. However, individuals can develop the necessary skills together through the process of engaging in a learning community. The ability and willingness to stay in "inquiry" can pose significant challenges for individuals and groups.

In learning communities, no one person is placed in the position of "knower" – everyone acknowledges their ability to learn from each other.[141] Notions of individual leaders are seen as barriers to the emergence of organizations and societies that can lead themselves. So, any member of a learning community can take on the role of facilitator. Sometimes, a group may decide that individuals will take turns in this role, other times facilitators emerge from the group in response to emerging needs, and in some groups, a facilitator

may be appointed. Regardless, the literature points to the importance of facilitation and outlines the role, functions and necessary skills for effective facilitation of a participatory learning project.

The role of facilitator is multi-faceted: "leader, action researcher, participant, collaborator, supporter, associate and consultant."[142] It has also been called that of change energizer,[143] energy worker,[144] and provider of "examples or possibilities."[145] One can be considered to be facilitating when they work to create a space for inquiry by helping members engage in the process of cooperative inquiry and helping to guide the group in decision-making about group processes. Effective facilitation engenders a space where people believe it is okay to do things wrong and that all members exist in dual roles as co-learners and co-researchers in the process of inquiry.[146]

Facilitation also includes helping the group notice their own process – those questions posed that open discussion and those that close it down – helping the group steer away from posing only negative questions and move towards appreciative inquiry.[147] A group member can help to facilitate cooperative inquiry through summarizing, paraphrasing, using examples and stories to broaden discussion, check out what is being shared or echo other stories.[148] Anyone can draw on their own theoretical knowledge to guide group discussions in ways that elicit tacit knowledge and encourage practitioners to think about the more complex implications involved in the details of their practice.[149] Stringer suggests that a facilitator's role is to develop a "context in which individuals and groups with divergent perspectives and interpretations can formulate a construction of their situation that makes sense to them all" – a "joint construction."[150] It is up to each individual member to garner the courage and determination that will sustain their involvement in a learning group, but individuals can also help others by enabling persistence and providing helpful challenge.[151]

A group may ask a member to pay attention to maintaining a specific group structure, or the group may determine together that structure can be allowed to emerge over time.[152] While a group member may serve to help keep the group focused on the inquiry, he/she must also recognize that at times, a group may need to explore "side avenues" and in these instances, he/she must be careful not to "straitjacket" the group.[153]

The role of balancing person-centred tasks with the professional tasks of the group can be another area in which group members may take on facilitation roles.[154] Douglas agrees that it can be very challenging to facilitate a focus on inquiry while also attending to the needs for nurturing, care, safety and role exchange for individuals within the group.[155]

Other Skills that Support Collaborative Inquiry in Action Research

Mumford outlines a number of individual behaviours that enable people to engage effectively in a learning community:

- enabling fellow members to share air time appropriately
- non-defensive about own actions and learning
- supportive about issues/concerns of others
- open in initiating and responding to issues
- analytical
- questioning in style, eliciting information in a non-defensive manner
- listening effectively
- accepting help
- creative in response to problems
- innovative in recognizing learning from task
- risk taking
- using task and learning cycle
- understanding and using learning styles
- using strengths of others as learners
- helping to motivate others as learners[156]

Burbules and Rice offer some the "communicative virtues" that reflect a certain type of regard for the perspectives and self-expression of others. These virtues are acquired in practice with others: "tolerance, patience, respect for differences and a willingness to listen, the inclination to admit that one may be mistaken, the ability to reinterpret or translate one's own concerns in a way that makes them comprehensible to others, the self-imposition of restraint in order that others may have a turn to speak, and the disposition to express one's self honestly and sincerely."[157] Stringer and Calderon propose qualities of communication that are important in action research that are not dissimilar to Burbules'and Rice's communicative virtues: being attentive, accepting, comprehensible, truthful, sincere, appropriate and advisory, and exercising self-control through self-awareness.[158] Using inclusive language is also important to building a cooperative learning community.[159]

Group Endings

Baldwin notes that inquiry groups that know they will be together for a specified period of time, should begin talking early on about processes for "ending" the group. He stresses that "ending is an important part of the cooperative inquiry process" and typically involves an event that evaluates the learning that took place during the inquiry and explores ways in which individuals might continue the inquiry process as they return to their work.[160]

In her work with a group of female adolescents, Luce-Kapler facilitated a difficult group ending by affirming the girls'knowledge and skills that would enable them to continue to work together after the adult facilitators had left the group.[161]

Potential Challenges Associated with Action Research

Participatory approaches have been characterized as "the swampy lowland" that involves immersing oneself in messy but crucially important problems.[162] Specific challenges are likely to include being comfortable with an emergent structure, process and learning, dealing with the doubt and anxiety that commonly surface, avoiding collusion and staying in inquiry, and addressing organizational or structural obstacles that inhibit meaningful inquiry. We will expand upon each of these potential challenges below and also point to the importance of embracing the challenges as integral to the process as opposed to viewing them as problems that must be overcome.

Being Comfortable with an Emergent Structure, Process and Learning

In emerging learning communities, people often desire an imposed structure that will lead the group to achieve predetermined outcomes. However, it is most common for the focus and scope of inquiry projects to change once participants begin to learn from the first phases of their work together.[163] The learning process includes noting the progress of one's inquiry over time, noting what happens as different things occur and as situations develop. Davis and Sumara note that "the structure that emerges ... has to be lived through for its endpoint to be realized."[164] The route that is followed needs to include attendance to bumps, turns, distractions, the importance of false starts, surprise turns and ever-mounting complexity .[165]

Fischer et al describe participants' early detachment and resistance that was only ameliorated after teachers began to see for themselves the changes in their practice that were derived from their engagement in a community of inquirers. This resulted in a reciprocal effect: upon seeing changes, teachers became more open to engaging in the process and through their increased engagement were more readily able to see the intimate link between their inquiry and their practice.[166]

The results of a cooperative inquiry are often most apparent in retrospect.[167] Members of Douglas' cooperative inquiry group struggled to fully understand how the process of inquiry actually worked for them.[168] Through discussion and allowing time for emerging questions to become meaningful, participants gain confidence in how the inquiry process can be useful to them.[169] Participants' post-inquiry skills are another source of evidence of the effectiveness of the cooperative inquiry process.[170]

Cook provides a good example of the tension that participants may feel in working with an emergent structure and process. One participant offered the following analogy:

> *"I've got the piece of the jigsaw but I've lost the top of the box, so I don't know quite what these bits add up to. I can feel the strong shape, but I don't know how certain bits go."*[171]

While not evident for participants at first, they eventually came to acknowledge the value of "stumbling around" in a period of "bumbling change" in a process of "searching for meaning."[172] Initially, they described collecting data, looking at everything, thinking about different plans and theories and not being able to explain why they were doing anything they were doing. They experienced an explosion of ideas and thoughts, they sorted and streamlined ideas to find important areas for investigation, while all the while struggling to feel confident that their perceptions of what might be most promising would not in fact simply reflect what was most familiar. They strove to become comfortable working in a process without an end – working without predefined outcomes. A critical element of the action research approach helped to lead the group forward – trust that they would figure out for themselves what they needed to focus on, trust that the process would "deliver without hurrying to conclusion."[173] They knew that in action research, they could rely upon their own "knowledge, experience, judgement and intuition to find the pivotal learning point."[174] Pivotal learning points sparked new trains of thought and drew in participants.

The action research process does not come with a blueprint for group activity. Rather, it opens opportunities for the group to determine what best fits their needs. Focusing attention on the inquiry process creates possibilities for employing various strategies for gathering and analyzing data. Thus, predetermining steps, procedures and outcomes is not only inappropriate, but also unnecessary. Grounding an inquiry process within an ethic of care and a participatory world view and engaging in cycles of reflection and action will enable the appropriate strategies for use to emerge through the process of the inquiry. As Reason states, action research is more than a particular methodology; it reflects a specific world view.[175] Confidence in the process, procedures and learning that arises from the experience in the learning community, will develop through determining cooperatively focus questions and sources of evidence.[176]

Some encouragement may be needed to help participants in some learning communities to overcome traditional notions about the processes and products of group endeavours. We suggest that the best way for practitioners to learn about the action research process is to engage in it. Eisikovits acknowledges that child care workers are likely to perceive research in ways that are not consistent with the action research approach. They are likely to see research as:

- being driven by outsiders;

- having little relevance to their interests and practice needs;
- involving change and control from outsiders;
- requiring change from their known way of practising;
- being inherently threatening; and
- involving people who do not work with the people whom they work with daily, yet whom possess the decision-making power pertaining to clients' needs.[177]

Through involvement in an action research process, child care workers will have an opportunity to experience an inclusive, respectful, caring and exciting approach to inquiry.

Facing Doubt and Anxiety

Nias suggests that practitioners often come from a place in which they regularly experience doubt and uncertainty about their practice. They are especially likely to doubt their own adequacy as researchers. They often work in settings that involve isolated and authority-dependent practice, contributing to their belief that they have nothing of significance to say about their practice. They commonly distrust the value of their practice experience.[178]

The action research process involves additional stimuli for doubt and anxiety. It commonly prompts participants to experience a heightened sense of uncertainty.[179] Participants may experience a "crisis of confidence" upon discovering discrepancies between their own vision of themselves as a practitioner and what is revealed through investigating their own practice.[180]

Action research relies on people's being able and willing to reveal mistakes they have made and what they believe they do not know.[181] Many workers feel like it is not okay to do things wrong at work – they must separate their learner-self from their self as worker. Action research is a process that asks people to embrace the unknown while also confronting their own assumptions, beliefs and practices. In the process, it is likely that feelings of doubt and anxiety will emerge for participants. Rubas attests to the fear that is commonly felt when one opens oneself up to the possibility of hearing things that might be hard to hear.[182] Views of expert knowledge can also constrain a person's ability to participate in action research by prompting them to devalue their personal experience, knowledge and professional voice.[183]

Senge states that "learning occurs between a fear and a need."[184] Questioning beliefs and mental models involves facing the unknown and this is usually accompanied by anxiety. However, if people want to avoid failing again and again, they must be willing to let go of some core beliefs and acquire new information, new tools and a new understanding. Dadds acknowledges that change is often associated with fear and people turn to the familiar in order to preserve a sense of stability and predictability.[185]

Another impetus for experiencing doubt and anxiety stems from inquiry's mandate to pose challenges. Many practitioners, especially women, members of minority groups or those who work in authority-dependent environments, will struggle with believing that the group will really support them if they raise challenges. Maughan and Reason stress that people need to become less self-conscious and less concerned with the judgements of others if they are to engage as participants in the action research process.[186]

Langer (1997) agrees that by examining differences in experience across situations and across individuals, people are likely to experience greater uncertainty than if they focused on fixed categories in their investigation. The uncertainty, while it may also prompt anxiety, also "creates the freedom to discover new meaning."[187]

Avoiding Collusion and Staying in Inquiry

Deciding whether an issue has been explored sufficiently prompts people to question whether they are perhaps colluding or if in fact exploration has reached its natural end. In Douglas' inquiry with Black women managers, the experience of challenging one another in the group proved to be deeply disturbing. Challenge brought up long-held feelings of being misunderstood or unconnected. Feeling at risk of being controlled by another person compelled the women to choose between abusing power or avoiding it. Many women, not just Black women, and women who work at low-paid, low-status jobs may experience similar challenges when it comes to negotiating power and staying in inquiry.[188] Darling describes a learning community that consistently put the social dimension of the group above the learning dimension.[189] Douglas notes that her group was assisted in resolving such a dilemma by regularly posing the question: "Have we been honest?"[190] Having someone play the role of "devil's advocate" can also help a group to avoid collusion and promote critical inquiry as long as it is not overplayed.[191]

Darling acknowledges that one of the great challenges of a community of inquiry is finding a way in which inquiry remains open, critical and challenging without becoming disrespectful and hostile. Getting to know and trust one another are essential components to engaging in cooperative inquiry, but they must be managed in a way that does not obliterate the educational dimension of the inquiry community.[192] In one example, Darling found that though a student cohort community made it possible for students to pursue learning, learning happened alongside the community rather than being generated by the community.[193]

These issues beg the questions:

What do you do with needs for support and therapeutic experience that may arise within a community of inquiry? and

How can a focus on learning coexist with the need to sustain compassionate responses to members' needs?

People must learn to disagree respectfully and argue their own positions with conviction while also making judgments about the worth and truth of those held by others. Tension will naturally arise when groups try to balance the duty to the inquiry and the duty to individuals within the group. Douglas describes this tension clearly in her account of a member taking charge of a group meeting while repeatedly saying "at the risk of breaking rapport."[194] The critical conscientiousness required by inquiry can be problematic for groups that have worked hard to support a caring and nurturing community.[195]

Wenger suggests that maintaining a spirit of inquiry can be accomplished by striving to recognize gaps in knowledge as well as being open to emergent directions and opportunities within the group, by paying attention to the depth of social capital generated within the group and by nurturing awareness of the group's concepts, language, tools, perspectives, assumptions, patterns and hidden possibilities.[196]

Burbules and Rice also comment on how to avoid collusion. They suggest that groups must come to view "difference" as an opportunity to challenge abilities to communicate and understand. People are likely to interact within comfort zones that define their willingness to embrace difference. These comfort zones exist along a spectrum. At the top of the spectrum is agreement and consensus, and in agreement and consensus, difference does not thrive. In order for groups to stay in inquiry, they must become comfortable with existing at lower ends of the spectrum where respect across differences exists despite little understanding. Here, people can come to appreciate and respect positions they disagree with.[197]

Finally, Charles and Glennie note that backsliding is normal and should not be seen as negative, and that venting frustrations is sometimes a necessary occurrence that enables people to return to reflection and action.[198]

Organizational/Structural Obstacles

Organizations that value self-reliance, promote territoriality and respect for established authority can inhibit the formation and sustenance of cooperative inquiry groups.[199] Stringer adds that competitive social values, impersonal work practices, authoritarian modes of control, limited resources and pushing for career advancement also serve to impede the development of humanistic and democratic research processes.[200]

Programs and projects that are initiated by authority figures and based upon their decisions and definitions are most likely to fail.[201] Even people who do not see themselves as authority figures can be seen by others to be coming from a place of authority, especially when the purpose of inquiry is to get others to change or to stop doing something. Additionally, when pressure to keep order predominates in a practice setting, problem-solving at a superficial

level is likely to overshadow opportunities for worthwhile learning that could take place through the action research process.[202]

On occasion, an inquiry might be launched without commitment to true learning and effecting change. These are doomed to fail. Holian described an inquiry that was agreed to by management in order to be "seen to be doing something" about problems within the organization. When the inquiry process clearly highlighted the problems, the facilitator was deemed a whistleblower and the learning from the inquiry was acted upon.[203]

Working with Challenges

Challenges are a normal part of the action research process. Feelings of uncertainty produce new insights and create an openness to new learning. To effect change, one needs to live with the disequilibrium of confronting one's own values, beliefs and practices. Resistance and backlash are better understood as "normalizing reactions" to having faced the exposure of underlying problems, the entrenched patterns of behaviour and the discussion of undiscussables.[204] People are likely to feel or express high levels of emotion. However, through sharing in action research, safety is created and through safety, more sharing can occur. It is a self-nourishing process.[205] The benefits will most often be self-evident for participants[206] and these include becoming less vulnerable to persuasion and control from outside.[207]

> *Without the learning energy of those who take initiative, the community becomes stagnant. Without strong relationships of belonging, it is torn apart. And without the ability to reflect, it becomes hostage to its own history.*[208]

Conclusion

How does the literature inform the development of participatory inquiry training for child care practitioners?

This literature review has pointed clearly to a number of things that are important to consider in the development and delivery of training aimed at supporting child care practitioners in doing participatory learning projects. Below, we note some of the limitations of the review and summarize some of the main points.

Being aware of including only select voices and knowledge in the review was difficult. The review reflects some gaps in knowledge from practitioners, because many do not publish

accounts of their work. Further, published accounts of action research capture the process only as propositional knowing[209] and the process of writing about action research involves tidying up the experience.[210] The requirements of turning experience into written text provide accounts of action research that can be somewhat misleading.

Cook documents an example of novice action researchers' struggle between the expectations they derived from reading the literature on action research and their own efforts at doing action research. The literature led them to believe that action research should involve a fairly clear plan," a "fairly clear cycle" of reflection and action, and a "systematic way" of doing the research. Cook suggests that reporting and publishing requirements often include pressure to articulate tidy outcomes. In the process of trying to articulate clearly something about the experience and to provide definite answers, important aspects of the process are ignored. Attempts to represent the process in writing for public access, the accounts tend to gloss over the importance of the messy process of sorting ideas.[211]

These tensions point to the need to give special consideration to possible ways in which more practitioners' voices can be included in the development of training. The need for the training process to reflect all four types of knowledge[212] and to provide training participants with an experience with the true, messy part of the process has also been highlighted through the process of conducting the review and the contents of the literature. Mellett agrees that though literature reviews and lectures can involve participants in *talking* about action research, they do not engage people in the process of action research, per se.[213] Thus, training needs to involve a practical leap to engage child care practitioners in the process, especially in light of the fact that so much about the experience of action research is not amenable to verbal description.

Helping people to become aware of and comfortable with expressing what they do not know also needs to be addressed in the training. Ways in which people can "lead from the middle" as learners within a community of learners need to be highlighted. Focusing on these aims will help participants to realize how, through the action research process, they can foster learning and development in themselves and in others.

Finally, good action research emerges in an evolutionary and developmental process over time, as individuals develop skills of inquiry and as communities of inquiry develop within communities of practice.[214] Thus, two-day training in participatory inquiry will only set the stage for child care practitioners to initiate inquiry groups and processes within their communities. Like good skills in child care practice, good action research skills emerge over time, through the process of engaging in the inquiry community itself and through the process of focusing inquiry on practice. The curriculum will best be captured as the process of "running the course" rather than as the course itself.[215]

Charles and Glennie assert that learning groups must go through the phases of initiating, maintaining and sustaining before they actually get to a place where they are creating together.[216] To reiterate a point made earlier, results of the inquiry experience provided in the training sessions are likely to be most easily observed in retrospect. Time must be allowed for results to be known and results will best be conveyed by child care practitioners themselves.

Endnotes

1. Canadian Child Care Federation, 1999; Canadian Child Care Federation, 2000
2. "Partners in Quality" is a term used by the Canadian Child Care Federation to refer to the key relationships that exist between stakeholders in child care communities. It is also the title for a series of resource books that focus on research and development efforts to explore how child care service providers, parents and other partners can work together to support and improve quality in child care.
3. Darling, 2001; Fisher, Mercado, Morgan, Robb, Sheehan-Carr & Torres, 2000; Ryan, 2001
4. Charles & Glennie, 2001
5. Benton & Wasko, 2000; Maughan & Reason, 2001; Day, 1998
6. Barnett & Taylor, 2001; Douglas, 2001; Holian, 1999; McArdle, 2001
7. Baldwin, 2001; Rubas, 2001
8. Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996; Borg & Gall, 1989; Hessler, R., 1992; Monette, Sullivan & De Jong, 1990
9. Worthen & Sanders, 1987; Barnsley & Ellis, 1992; Ellis, 1998; Bozzo & Hall, 1999; Health Canada, 1996; van der Eyken 1992
10. Davis et al 1996, p. 158
11. Baldwin, 2001; VanderPlaat & Guy, 2002
12. Gregory, 2000
13. Kaplan, 2000
14. Gregory, 2000
15. Gregory, 2000, Section 4, para. 2
16. Stringer, 1999
17. Ibid, 1999
18. Bunning, 1997
19. Calderon, 1999
20. Gregory, 2000
21. Reason and Bradbury 2001, p. 9
22. Stringer, 1999, p. 201
23. Maguire, 2001
24. Morrissey, 2000
25. Stringer, 1999
26. Senge, 2002, Five Principles, para. 3
27. Reason & Bradbury, 2001
28. Nias, 1991
29. Barrett & Taylor, 2001
30. Douglas, 2001

31. Gregory, 2000
32. Stringer, 1999
33. Cook 1998, p. 103
34. Winter, 1998, p. 67
35. Thomas, 2002, page header
36. ibid, Imagination and Possibility, para. 2
37. Dadds, 1998
38. Subramaniam, 2001
39. Day, 1991; 1998
40. Mumford, 1997
41. Reason & Bradbury, 2001
42. Davis, Sumara & Kieren, 1996
43. Langer, 1997, p. 139
44. Thompson 1984, quoted in Day 1991, p. 48
45. Ryan, 2001
46. Douglas, 2001
47. Heron, 1996; Reason, 2001. Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Reason & Torbert, 2001
48. Reason, 2001, Integrating First, Second and Third-person Action Research/practice, Table 1
49. Yanow, 2000
50. Maughan & Reason, 2001
51. Douglas, 2001
52. Winter, 1998
53. Green, 1997
54. Mellett, 2000
55. Eisikovits, 1991
56. Heron, 1996
57. Senge, 2002
58. Ibid
59. Benton & Wasko, 2000
60. Heron, 1996, Individual Skills and a Culture of Competence, para. 9
61. Green, 1997
62. Wesley & Buysse, 2001
63. Senge, 2002, Introduction, para. 3
64. Heron, 1996; Reason & Torbert, 2001
65. Baldwin, 2001; Douglas, 2001
66. Reason & Bradbury, 2001, Action, Participation and Experience, para. 2
67. Fischer et al, 2000
68. Maguire, 2001
69. Dadds, 1998
70. Charles & Glennie, 2001

71. Wenger, 2000
72. Keating, 1999
73. Yanow, 2000, p. 259
74. Mellett 2000, section v, para. 10
75. Davis & Sumara, 2000
76. Davis, Sumara & Kieren, 1996
77. Senge, 2002
78. Mumford, 1997
79. Bunning 1997, p. 28
80. Langer 1997
81. Ibid
82. Bunning, 1997
83. Stringer, 1999
84. Ibid
85. Maquire, 2001
86. Mellett, 2000, section v, para. 9
87. Ibid, Conclusion, para. 1
88. Barrett & Taylor, 2001
89. McArdle, 2001
90. Douglas, 2001
91. Charles & Glennie, 2001
92. Ryan, 2001
93. Maughan & Reason, 2001
94. Baldwin, 2001
95. Luce-Kapler, 1997
96. Stringer, 1999
97. Barrett & Taylor, 2001
98. Douglas, 2001
99. Baldwin, 2001
100. McArdle, 2001
101. Fischer et al, 2000
102. Winter, 1998
103. Baldwin, 2001
104. Barrett & Taylor, 2001
105. Ibid
106. McArdle, 2001
107. Barret & Taylor, 2001
108. Charles & Glennie, 2001
109. Calderon, 1999
110. Fisher et al, 2000

111. Wesley & Buysse, 2001
112. Lindsay & Mason, 2000
113. Ibid
114. Mumford, 1997
115. Baldwin, 2001
116. Luce-Kapler, 1997
117. Dadds, 1998
118. Heron, 1996
119. Lindsay & Mason, 2000
120. Maughan & Reason 2001
121. Winter, 1998
122. Ibid
123. Barrett & Taylor, 2001
124. McArdle, 2001
125. Ryan, 2001
126. Baldwin, 2001
127. Douglas, 2001
128. Ryan, 2001
129. Fischer et al, 2000
130. Lavell, 2000
131. Luce-Kapler, 1997
132. Green, 1997
133. Stringer, 1999
134. Dadds, 1998, pp. 45-46
135. Winter, 1998
136. Ibid
137. Ibid, p. 66
138. Ibid
139. Ibid, pp. 66-67
140. Stringer, 1999, pp. 98-100
141. Senge, 2002
142. Ryan, 2001, Leadership Concerns, para. 2
143. Barrett & Taylor, 2001
144. McArdle, 2001
145. Luce-Kapler, 1997, p. 328
146. Douglas, 2001
147. McArdle, 2001
148. Baldwin, 2001
149. Lindsay & Mason, 2000
150. Stringer, 1999, p. 45

151. Baldwin, 2001

152. Douglas, 2001

153. Baldwin, 2001, Getting Started, para. 5

154. Charles & Glennie, 2001

155. Douglas, 2001

156. Mumford, 1997

157. Burbules & Rice, 1991, p. 411

158. Stringer, 1999; Calderon, 1999

159. Stringer, 1999

160. Baldwin, 2001, Endings and Evaluation, para. 2

161. Luce-Kapler, 1997

162. Day, 1991

163. Winter, 1998

164. Davis & Sumara, 2000, p. 841

165. Ibid

166. Fischer et al, 2000

167. Douglas, 2001; Yanow, 2000

168. Douglas, 2001

169. McArdle, 2001

170. Heron, 1996

171. Cook, 1998

172. Ibid, p. 99-102

173. Ibid, p. 104

174. Ibid, p. 100

175. Reason, 2001

176. McArdle, 2001

177. Eisikovits, 1991

178. Nias, 1991

179. Winter, 1998

180. Green, 1997

181. Douglas, 2001

182. Rubas, 2001

183. Dadds, 1998.

184. Senge, 2002, Five Principles, para. 1

185. Dadds, 1998

186. Maughan & Reason, 2001

187. Langer ,1997, p. 130

188. Douglas, 2001

189. Darling, 2001

190. Douglas, 2001, Learning about Emergent Structure, para. 4

191. Baldwin, 2001

192. Darling, 2001

193. Ibid

194. Douglas, 2001

195. Darling, 2001

196. Wenger, 2000, p. 229

197. Burbules & Rice, 1991

198. Charles & Glennie 2001

199. Nias, 1991

200. Stringer 1999, p. 189

201. Ibid

202. Green, 1997

203. Hollan, 1999, The Personal Impact, para. 5

204. Ibid, An Action Research Project in my own Organization, para. 4

205. Maguire, 2001

206. Mumford, 1997

207. Nias, 1991

208. Wenger, 2000, p. 230

209. Mellett, 2000

210. Cook, 1998

211. Ibid

212. Heron, 1996; Reason, 2001; Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Reason & Torbert, 2001

213. Mellett, 2000

214. Reason & Bradbury, 2001

215. Davis & Sumara, 2000

216. Charles & Glennie, 2001

References

Baldwin, M. (2001). Co-operative Inquiry as a Tool for Professional Development. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 14 (6). Retrieved January 11, 2002, www.bath.ac.uk/carpp/SPAR/MarkBaldwin.htm

Barnsley, J., & Ellis, D. (1992). *Research for Change: Participatory action research for community groups*. Vancouver, BC: Women's Research Centre.

Barrett, P., & Taylor, B. (2001). Beyond Reflection: Cake and co-operative inquiry. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 14 (6). Retrieved January 11, 2002, www bath ac.uk/carpp/SPAR/PennyBarrett.htm

Benton, J., & Wasko, J. (2001). "Anything Worthwhile Takes Time": Eight schools discuss impacts and impressions of doing action research. *Networks: An on-line journal for teacher research*, 3 (1). Retrieved January 11, 2002, www.oise.utoronto.ca/%7Ectd/networks/journal/Vol%203%281%29 2000april/Article3.html

Bozzo, S., & Hall, M. (1999). *A Review of Evaluation Resources for Nonprofit Organizations*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy.

Bunning, C. (1997). Placing Action Learning and Action Research in Context. In A. Mumford (Ed.) *Action Learning at Work*. Aldershot: Gower.

Burbules, N., & Rice, S. (1991). Dialogue across Differences: Continuing the Conversation. *Harvard Educational Review*, 61 (4), 393-416.

Calderon, M. (1999). Teachers Learning Communities for Cooperation in Diverse Settings. *Theory Into Practice*, 38 (2), 94-99.

Canadian Child Care Federation (1999). *Partners in Quality 2: Relationships*, Ottawa, ON: CCCF.

Canadian Child Care Federation (2000). *Partners in Quality 4: Communities*, Ottawa, ON: CCCF.

Charles, M., & Glennie, S. (2001). Co-operative Inquiry: Changing interprofessional practice. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 14 (6). Retrieved January 11, 2002 www.bath.ac.uk.carpp/SPAR/CharlesGlennie.htm

Cook, T. (1998). The Importance of Mess in Action Research. [Electronic Version] *Educational Action Research*, 6 (1), 93-109.

Dadds, M. (1998). Supporting Practitioner Research: A challenge. [Electronic Version] *Educational Action Research*, 6 (1), 39-52.

Darling, L. (2001). When Conceptions Collide: Constructing a community of inquiry for teacher education in British Columbia. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 27 (1), 7-22. Retrieved February 1, 2002, EBSCOHost database.

Davis, B., & Sumara, D. (2000). Curriculum Forms: On the assumed shapes of knowing and knowledge. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 32 (6), 821-845.

Davis, B., Sumara, D., & Kieren, T. (1996). Cognition, Co-emergence, Curriculum. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 28 (2), 151-169.

Day, C. (1991). Only Connect ... Relationships between higher education and schools. In H. Letiche, J. van der Wolf and F. Plooij (Eds.), *The Practitioner's Power of Choice: In staff-development and in-service training*. Amsterdam: Swets & Zeitlinger.

Day, C. (1998). Working with the Different Selves of Teachers: Beyond comfortable collaboration. [Electronic version] *Educational Action Research*, 6 (2), 255-275.

Douglas, C. (2001). Using Co-operative Inquiry with Black Women Managers: Exploring possibilities for moving from surviving to thriving. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 14 (6). Retrieved January 11, 2002, www/bath.ac.uk/carpp/SPAR/CarlisDouglas.htm

Eisikovits, R. (1991). The Child-Care Worker as Ethnographer: Uses of the anthropological approach in residential child and youth care education and practice. In J. Beker & Z. Eisikovits (Eds.), *Knowledge Utilization in Residential Child and Youth Care Practice*. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America.

Ellis, D. (1998). *Finding Our Way: A participatory evaluation method for Family Resource Programs*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs.

Fischer, D., Mercado, M., Morgan, V., Robb, L., Sheehan-Carr, S., & Torres, M. (2000). The Curtain Rises: Teachers unveil their processes of transformation in doing classroom inquiry. *Networks: An on-line journal for teacher research*, 3 (1). Retrieved January 11, 2002, www.oise.utoronto.ca/%7Ectd/networks/journal/Vol%203%281%29.2000april/article1.html

Goodwin, W., & Goodwin, L. (1996). *Understanding Quantitative and Qualitative Research in Early Childhood Education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Green, K. (1997). What Counts as 'Better'Practice?: Supporting students in improving their practice by drawing out the value dimensions. [Electronic Version] *Educational Action Research*, 5 (1), 31-42.

Gregory, M. (2000). Care as a Goal of Democratic Education. *Journal of Moral Education*, 29 (4), 445-462. [Electronic Version] Retrieved March 5, 2002, EBSCOHost database.

Health Canada (1996). *Guide to Project Evaluation: A participatory approach*. Ottawa, ON: Population Health Directorate, Health Canada.

Heron, J. (1996). Quality as Primacy of the Practical. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 2 (1), 41-57. Retrieved January 18, 2002, EBSCOHost database.

Hessler, R. (1992). *Social Research Methods*. St. Paul, MN: West Publishing.

Holian, R. (1999). Doing Action Research in my own Organization: Ethical dilemmas, hopes and triumphs. *Action Research International*, Paper 3. [Electronic version] Retrieved January 15, 2002, www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/ari/p-rholian99.html"

Kaplan, L. (2000). A Trio of Books Applying the Ethic of Care: Personal, institutional and global dimensions. *Peace & Change*, 25 (4), 516-527. [Electronic Version] Retrieved March 5, 2002, EBSCOHost database.

Keating, D. (1999). The Learning Society: A human development agenda. In D. Keating and C. Hertzman (Eds.), *Developmental Health and the Wealth of Nations: Social, Biological and Educational Dynamics*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Langer, E. (1997). *The Power of Mindful Learning*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books.

Lavell, M. (2000). If This is Empowering, Why Don't I Feel Better: An aboriginal educator's perspective on action research as a strategy for facilitating change in aboriginal education. *Ontario Action Researcher*, 3. Retrieved January 15, 2002, www.nipissingu.ca/oar/vol-3-2000/v332.html

Lindsay, A., & Mason, R. (2000). Focusing on Reflection with Early Childhood Practitioners. *Networks: An on-line journal for teacher research*, 3 (1). Retrieved January 11, 2002, www.oise.utoronto.ca/%7Ectd/networks/journal/Vol%203%282%29.2000sept/article1.html

Luce-Kapler, R. (1997). Becoming a Community of Researchers. [Electronic version] *Educational Action Research*, 5 (2), 321-329.

Maguire, P. (2001). Reflections on Co-operative Inquiry in this Historic Moment. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 14 (6). Retrieved January 11, 2002, www.bath.ac.uk/carpp/SPAR/Commentary.htm

Maughan, E., & Reason, P. (2001). A Co-operative Inquiry into Deep Ecology. *ReVision*, 23 (4), 18-25. [Electronic version] Retrieved January 18, 2002, EBSCOHost database.

McArdle, K. (2001). Establishing a Co-operative Inquiry Group: The perspective of a 'first time'inquirer. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 14 (6). Retrieved January 11, 2002, www.bath.ac.uk/carpp/SPAR/KateMcArdle.htm

Mellett, P. (2000). *Educational Action Research within Teaching as a Research-Based Profession*. Retrieved March 11, 2002, www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/values/pmreview.doc

Monette, D., Sullivan, T., & De Jong, C. (1990). *Applied Social Research: Tool for the human services (2nd Ed.)*. Orlando, FL: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Morrissey, J. (2000). Indicators of Citizen Participation: Lessons from learning teams in rural EZ/EC communities. *Community Development Journal*, 35 (1), 59-74.

Mumford, A. (1997). Action Learning as a Vehicle for Learning. In A. Mumford (Ed.) *Action Learning at Work*. Aldershot: Gower.

Nias, J. (1991). How Practitioners are Silenced, How Practitioners are Empowered. In H. Letiche, J. van der Wolf and F. Plooij (Eds.), *The Practitioner's Power of Choice: In staff-development and in-service training*. Amsterdam: Swets & Zeitlinger.

Reason, P. (2001). Learning and Change through Action Research. In J. Henry (Ed.), *Creative Management*. London: Sage. [Electronic version] Retrieved January 8, 2002, www.bath.ac.uk/~mnspwr/Papers/LearningChangeThroughActionResearch.htm

Reason, P., & Bradbury, H. (2001). *Handbook of Action Research: Participatory inquiry and practice*. London: Sage. [Electronic version] Retrieved January 8, 2002, www.bath.ac.uk/~mnspwr/Papers/HandbookIntroduction.htm

Reason, P., & Torbert, W. (2001). The Action Turn: Toward a Transformational Science: A further look at the scientific merits of action research. *Concepts and Transformations*, 6 (1), 1-37. [Electronic version] Retrieved January 8, 2002, www.bath.ac.uk/~mnspwr/Papers/TransformationalSocialScience.htm

Rubas, J. (2001). Supporting Teachers by Listening and Learning: A consultant's action research project. *Ontario Action Researcher*, 4. Retrieved January 15, 2002, www.nipissingu.ca/oar/oarCurrIssue/V421.html

Ryan, T. (2001). The Role of Leadership in Action Research. *Networks: An on-line journal for teacher research*, 4 (1). Retrieved January 11, 2002, www.oise.utoronto.ca/%7Ectd/networks/journal/Vol%204%281%29.2001may/article3.html

Senge, P. (2002). *Creating Quality Communities*. [Electronic version] Retrieved January 22, 2002, www.sol-ne.org/res/kr/qualcom.html

Stringer, E. (1999). *Action Research* (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Subramaniam, B. (2001). Technoscientific Imaginations. *Feminist Studies*, 27 (2), 526-531. [Electronic Version] Retrieved March 7, 2002, EBSCOHost database.

Thomas, N. (2002) *Dictionary of Philosophy of Mind - Imagination*. Retrieved March 5, 2002, www.artsci.wustl.edu/~philos/MindDict/imagination.html.

van der Eyken, W. (1992). *Introducing Evaluation: A practical introduction to evaluation in early childhood projects*. The Hague: Bernard van Leer Foundation.

VanderPlaat, M. & Guy, A. (2002). *Building on Community Strengths: Creating a new reporting and evaluation system for community-development projects*. Paper presented at the 6th National Health Promotion Conference, April 9, 2002, Victoria, B.C.

Wenger, E. (2000). Communities of Practice and Social Learning Systems. *Organization*, 7 (2), 225-246.

Wesley, P., & Buysse, V. (2001). Communities of Practice: Expanding professional roles to promote reflection and shared inquiry. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 21 (2), 114-124. Retrieved January 18, 2002, EBSCOHost database.

Winter, R. (1998). Finding a Voice - Thinking with Others: A conception of action research. [Electronic Version] *Educational Action Research*, 6 (1), 53-68.

Yanow, D. (2000). Seeing Organizational Learning: A 'cultural' view. *Organization*, 7 (2), 247-268.

Exploring Inquiry Approaches for Child Care Communities

Annotated Bibliography

by Diana Nicholson and Frances Ricks

Diana Nicholson is research coordinator for the Participatory Inquiry section of the Canadian Child Care Federation initiative funded by Human Resources Development Canada and works through the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria.

Frances Ricks is the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies at the University of Victoria and a professor in the School of Child and Youth Care. She is one of the principle investigators on the Canadian Child Care Federation initiative funded by Human Resources Development Canada, for the Participatory Inquiry section and consults on the Ethics Training section.

Introduction

This annotated bibliography presents the 46 sources that were examined for a review of the literature on participatory inquiry. This review was intended to inform the development of training that would enable child care practitioners to create learning communities within child care communities to engage in participatory learning projects. The participatory learning projects in child care communities are expected to involve child care practitioners and others working together in deliberate inquiry in order to effect positive changes in child care practice.

The more tangible aspects of a participatory inquiry process are well-captured in existing participatory program evaluation and community-based research resources. However, the less tangible, less easily captured aspects of participatory inquiry still need to be documented. Thus, the review of literature aimed to uncover those aspects that are more difficult to name, those aspects that escape prescription. The literature has pointed to many issues that need to be considered in the development and delivery of training in participatory inquiry for child care practitioners.

The literature reviewed reflects knowledge in the areas of action research and cooperative inquiry, learning communities and communities of practice and also examples from organizational learning and learning organizations. The authors are from the United Kingdom, Canada, The Hague, Australia, the United States and Israel. Many authors write from their

position as academics and researchers. However, a significant contribution to the literature has been made by others including post-graduate students, partners engaged in learning projects and others representing various professions.

The references below are presented according to their area of focus. The sources have come from the area of action research/cooperative inquiry, and these have been organized according to the perspective reflected by the author(s). For example, theorists describe action research/cooperative inquiry; writers who have been either a part of an inquiry group or who were hired to support the group write from the perspective of group facilitator; those authors writing more specifically from their perspective as practitioners are presented separately. Authors focusing attention on learning communities/communities of practice are presented next, followed by a couple of sources on organizational learning/learning organizations. Literature on several key topics that emerged in the main articles is presented toward the end of this bibliography.

Describing Action Research/Cooperative Inquiry

Theorists and Academics

Bunning, C. (1997). Placing Action Learning and Action Research in Context. In A. Mumford (Ed.) *Action Learning at Work*. Aldershot: Gower

Bunning argues that action learning and action research require a paradigm shift from a conventional, expert-driven, didactic view of knowledge as a valuable, pre-produced, easily transferable product, to a view that involves people in co-creating knowledge based on their own awareness, information and skills. In action learning projects, individual reflection, challenging questions and the "synergic creativity of the group" provide the mechanisms for learning.

Heron, J. (1996). Quality as Primacy of the Practical. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 2 (1), 41-57. Retrieved January 18, 2002, EBSCOHost database

This article highlights the importance of focusing on action in research. Cycles of shared reflection and individual action can help communities of practice refine explicit statements of their common values, norms and beliefs. Changes in practice are effected by moving beyond simply increasing knowledge about practice. Knowledge is formed in and for action and the role of practical knowledge (knowing how) is an inherent part of action that pertains directly to quality. Heron outlines the four types of knowing (experiential, presentational, propositional and practical) and stresses that skills can be described only up to a point – they exist in large part beyond language and conceptual formulation. He argues that researchers need to avoid making propositional knowledge the primary goal of research and suggests that the quality of an inquiry will be evidenced in the quality of the participants' postinquiry skills.

Maguire, P. (2001). Reflections on Co-operative Inquiry in this Historic Moment. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 14 (6). Retrieved January 11, 2002, www.bath.ac.uk/carpp/SPAR/Commentary.htm

In reflecting on where action research is today, the author stresses that action research is more than a research "method." The ultimate goal of action research is to create a more just, loving world. In efforts to effect change, Maguire posits that it is beneficial to focus on where the world is, not where you want it to be — the "near environment." Through building safe, trusting environments that facilitate reflective inquiry, the environment comes to be changed through the process of studying it. Action research is also premised on the belief that human knowledge is created in relationship. Thus, it involves a process that enables people to develop the skills and interactions to reflect, learn and act together. Sharing personal stories and disclosing feelings contributes to building and nurturing the relationships that are essential to effective cooperative inquiry. Action research groups need to pay attention to creating a space for marginalized people to raise their voices, yet also need to recognize that it won't necessarily be an immediately wonderful experience. It can involve pain, personal risk and costs.

Mellett, P. (2000). *Educational Action Research within Teaching as a Research-Based Profession.* Retrieved March 11, 2002, www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/values/pmreview.doc

This author proposes a new evidence-based professionalism that is premised upon the integrity of one's acts and rooted in personal development and critical community. He proposes that situational certainty is the new norm that can effectively replace the need for scientific certainty. Mellett offers an example of how to transform a general question into an action research question that shifts the focus to one's own involvement, potential for action, relationship to others and positive effects for beneficiaries. The examination of personal knowledge, experience and the use of questions that provide a personal focus contribute significantly to the growth of practical theory and wisdom. He stresses the importance of engaging in critiques of others' writing as participants rather than as neutral observers and describes the dilemmas he faced in the process of conducting a review of the literature on teacher research and action research. Mellett highlights the difference between talking about and actually doing action research.

Mumford, A. (1997). Action Learning as a Vehicle for Learning. In A. Mumford (Ed.), *Action Learning at Work.* Aldershot: Gower

Mumford argues that learning occurs when programmed knowledge is combined with questioning insight. In action learning, people must be prepared to share mistakes, wait for results, tolerate disruption, pose unwanted questions, and embrace action that might at first not seem okay. Reflection is highlighted as the process by which previous

learning can be unfrozen, prompting people to become more aware of how they perceive the world, how their conceptions are formed and how they can be changed. Mumford focuses on the importance of people coming together in order to solve problems they share and outlines the behaviours needed to engage effectively in learning groups.

Reason, P. (2001). Learning and Change through Action Research. In J. Henry (Ed.), *Creative Management*. London: Sage. [Electronic version] Retrieved January 8, 2002, www.bath.ac.uk/~mnspwr/Papers/LearningChangeThroughActionResearch.htm

Reason outlines how action research grew out of the influences of experiential learning, action learning, humanistic psychology, popular education, organizational development and feminist thinking, and how it is reflected in inquiry processes known as participatory research, action learning, action science, action inquiry and cooperative inquiry, each stressing the integration of action and reflection so that the inquiry process is directly relevant to the issues being studied. The three broad strategies of first-person, second-person and third-person research are described. Reason proposes that action research serves to transform power relations in its insistence that inquiry involve everyone for whom the issues being explored are of interest.

Reason, P. & Bradbury, H. (2001). *Handbook of Action Research: Participatory inquiry and practice*. London: Sage. [Electronic version] Retrieved January 8, 2002, www.bath.ac.uk/~mnspwr/Papers/ HandbookIntroduction.htm

In this comprehensive handbook, action research is described as a form of participatory inquiry that seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities. Reason and Bradbury contend that shared inquiry, through the processes of mutual sense-making and engaging in collective action, affords people an opportunity to celebrate their humanity, and experience the joys of active existence. Through uncovering the influences of power and including multiple voices and perspectives, action research works towards developing more democratic forms of knowledge.

Reason, P. & Torbert, W. (2001). The Action Turn: Toward a Transformational Science: A further look at the scientific merits of action research. *Concepts and Transformations*, 6(1), 1-37. [Electronic version] Retrieved January 8, www.bath.ac.uk/~mnspwr/Papers/ TransformationalSocialScience.htm

The focus of this article is on the evolution of transformation science, hinging on the linguistic turn that has predominated in the social sciences since the 1960's. The emergence of the action turn in the social sciences is described as complementing the linguistic turn and extending it to forge a direct link between intellectual knowledge and moment-to-moment personal and social action, so that inquiry contributes directly to the

flourishing of humans, their communities, and the ecosystems of which they are part. The authors argue against empirical positivism and contend that academic knowledge has little value in and of itself. They propose three broad strategies for action research (first-person, second-person and third-person research) and recommend the integration of all three in moment-to-moment living. The article also includes description of four types of validity, four ways of knowing and four territories of experience.

Stringer, E. (1999). *Action Research* (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

This book is a comprehensive resource that describes action research as a decentralized, deregulated and cooperative process in which individuals are assisted to extend their own understanding of situations in order to resolve problems that they deem to be important. The four characteristics (democratic, equitable, liberating and life enhancing) of community-based action research are outlined as are potential obstacles to a humanistic and democratic research process. The book focuses on the ways in which action research can influence practice and serve to reveal different constructions of reality. Stringer also offers a broad perspective of the appropriate foci for program evaluation. The chapters guide the reader through steps to creating an action research group, finding and documenting discoveries in order to build a picture, interpreting and analyzing information, formulating practical solutions to the problems that have been the focus of the research, and writing reports. The book concludes with an overview of theory behind action research practice.

Winter, R. (1998). Finding a Voice – Thinking with Others: A conception of action research. [Electronic Version] *Educational Action Research*, 6 (1), 53-68

In this article, action research is proclaimed to provide practitioners with a basis for exercising their responsibilities. Through developing practice and understanding of practice, action research enables continuous learning that informs action. Winter stresses that the issue of validity should be part of discussions in action research and proposes, but that it should focus on following a justifiable process. Winter describes the emergent nature of the focus of inquiry in action research and outlines clearly what is involved in data gathering and analysis.

Process Facilitators

Baldwin, M. (2001). Co-operative Inquiry as a Tool for Professional Development. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 14 (6). Retrieved January 11, 2002, www.bath.ac.uk/carpp/SPAR/MarkBaldwin.htm

Baldwin writes from the perspective of an external facilitator hired to work with a group of professional social workers to explore their practice. While focusing on the role of

and skills required by a group facilitator, this article also describes why cooperative inquiry was the chosen approach, how change occurs through cooperative inquiry, the issues surrounding group membership, and the importance of determining in advance appropriate means to end a group.

Barrett, P. & Taylor, B. (2001). Beyond Reflection: Cake and co-operative inquiry. *Systemic Practice and Action Research,* 14 (6). Retrieved January 11, 2002, www.bath.ac.uk/carpp/SPAR/PennyBarrett.htm

In this example from nursing, a group of women emphasize the importance of valuing and validating women's voices, exploring interests, developing relationships and minimizing power differentials in cooperative inquiry projects. The ways in which cooperative inquiry fit with their practice values are articulated. The role of the facilitator, ways of negotiating knowledge-power, issues surrounding determining group membership and the importance of noting group strengths are highlighted. Transcripts of group meetings offered participants physical evidence of the importance of their activities. The authors provide an example of how cooperative inquiry enabled new insight into a systemic barrier to effective practice.

Benton, J. & Wasko, J. (2001). "Anything Worthwhile Takes Time": Eight schools discuss impacts and impressions of doing action research. *Networks: An on-line journal for teacher research*, 3 (1). Retrieved January 11, 2002, www.oise.utoronto.ca/%7Ectd/networks/journal/Vol%203%281%29.2000april/Article3.html

Action research was the method used to develop, expand and examine practice and to improve students' literacy. The action research process began with a 2-day retreat during which they formulated their "research questions" and decided to use collaborative and school-wide action research. University liaisons were part of the action research group who worked to provide assistance to the teacher-researchers. They found that action research was beneficial to teachers' professional development, to increasing students' literacy and for connecting research to practice. These authors assert that often teachers do certain things in their practice because they are told that those things constitute "good practice," yet they don't usually collect and analyze the data to support or refute its effectiveness in their own classroom.

Charles, M. & Glennie, S. (2001). Co-operative Inquiry: Changing interprofessional practice. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 14 (6). Retrieved January 11, 2002, www.bath.ac.uk.carpp/SPAR/CharlesGlennie.htm

In this example, mandated changes within an organization that required attitudinal shifts provided the impetus for a cooperative inquiry project. Focus questions replaced research questions in guiding this inquiry. The role of the facilitator, the dynamics of the inquiry group and the importance of group ownership of the process are highlighted.

The authors assert that groups rarely move to creating together without having first moved through phases of initiating, maintaining and sustaining the group inquiry. Backsliding and venting frustrations are suggested to be normal occurrences in cooperative inquiry projects.

Cook, T. (1998). The Importance of Mess in Action Research. [Electronic Version] *Educational Action Research*, 6 (1), 93-109

This article stresses the importance of speaking about "mess" in accounts of action while also attempting to capture the messiness of an action research process in which the author participated. It describes how a group of novice action researchers struggled to feel confident that their efforts at action research matched adequately the accounts of action research contained in the literature. Cook argues that reporting and publishing requirements prompt writers to gloss over the messy but essential process of sorting ideas involved in action research. Cook highlights the importance of "stumbling around" in a period of "bumbling change" in the process of "searching for meaning" as inherent aspects of doing action research. The group was able to move forward in their inquiry by focusing on an underlying principle of action research – they could rely on their own knowledge, experience, judgement and intuition to figure out for themselves what they needed to focus on. The role of pivotal learning points in sparking new trains of thought and engaging participants is also described.

Dadds, M. (1998). Supporting Practitioner Research: A challenge. [Electronic Version] *Educational Action Research*, 6 (1), 39-52

Dadds outlines several key elements that influence the potential of action research to result in an enhanced understanding of practice. These issues are:

1) identify research questions that have significance in the lives of the beneficiaries;
2) add broad perspectives to local purposes;
3) support people through the turbulence that accompanies the shock of seeing oneself, the release of sensitive and controversial perspectives that can cause strife and conflict in workplaces;
4) decentre from one's own perspective in order to imagine how another person is experiencing the research situation (linked to ability to support);
5) resist smoothing away the discomforts, contradictions and struggles involved in the work;
6) expect and respond to varying needs for support among participants while striving to balance support with empowerment;
7) regular questions, not definitive answers, will advance practice;
8) views of expert knowledge can constrain a person's ability to participate in action research by prompting them to devalue their personal knowledge, experience and professional voice. Dadds also comments on the issue of information validity in

action research, and suggests that it is best represented by reflective exploration of worthwhileness as viewed from several exchanged positions of interest.

Green, K. (1997). What Counts as 'Better' Practice?: Supporting students in improving their practice by drawing out the value dimensions. [Electronic Version] *Educational Action Research*, 5 (1), 31-42

Green combines her experience as a supervisor of student teachers' action research projects with action research on her own supervisory practices. She supports students' involvement in action research as a means to foster student control over their own learning. She outlines some challenges associated with facilitating students' action research projects, highlights the crisis of confidence that practitioners often experience in the process of examining their own practice, and points to the importance of value clarification and questioning assumptions in efforts to improve practice. Green also comments on common misuses of action research and gaps in the literature.

Holian, R. (1999). Doing Action Research in my own Organization: Ethical dilemmas, hopes and triumphs. *Action Research International*, Paper 3. [Electronic version] Retrieved January 15, 2002, www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/ari/p-rholian99.html

Holian notes that, at times, there is a fine line between what is a cover-up and what is appropriate informal feedback about the impact of a behaviour. Here, a senior executive within an organization attempted to use action research to improve ethical decision-making within this organization. The themes of resistance and backlash to an open inquiry emerged strongly as the executive was deemed a "whistleblower." In this account of action research, the inquiry was agreed to because it was considered to be a benign process that would allow management to "be seen to be doing something" about problems within the organization. Holian stresses that in action research, resistance and backlash are better understood as "normalizing reactions" to having faced the exposure of underlying problems, entrenched patterns of behaviour and the discussion of "undiscussables."

Luce-Kapler, R. (1997). Becoming a Community of Researchers. [Electronic version] *Educational Action Research*, 5 (2), 321-329

This article describes an action research group composed of two adult facilitators and a group of adolescent females. Writing was used to create life narratives that were analyzed to reveal how they reflected cultural, historical and social influences in their lives. This prompted new understandings, and contributed to the girls' theorizing about female lives in society. The article, written by one of the adult facilitators, contains their reflections on the action research process and their role as facilitators, including

evolving conceptions of the purposes of the group, shared leadership within the group and the difficulty that group endings can pose. They stress the importance of continuously asking questions – both of themselves as leaders and of others' experiences in the action research group.

Maughan, E. & Reason, P. (2001). A Co-operative Inquiry into Deep Ecology. *ReVision*, 23 (4), 18-25. [Electronic version] Retrieved January 18, 2002, EBSCOHost database.

The experience of a group of graduate students taking a course in deep ecology is described as an example of building a community of inquiry. Each of the four ways of knowing (propositional, experiential, practical and presentational) were the focus of one of four phases of the action-reflection cycle. Participants describe the experience as one that prompted joy, sorrow, confusion, frustration, wonder, and turbulence. Emotional experiences are suggested to have facilitated a paradigm shift in some participants.

McArdle, K. (2001). Establishing a Co-operative Inquiry Group: The perspective of a 'first time' inquirer. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 14 (6). Retrieved January 11, 2002, www.bath.ac.uk/carpp/SPAR/KateMcArdle.htm

McArdle, a PhD student conducting an inquiry within an organization, describes the early stages of her first experience establishing a cooperative inquiry group. She documents a process that links feminist inquiry to action research. The process involved modelling innovative ways of working together, paying attention to allowing voice and inclusive language, resisting urges to prove the benefits of the approach through talk, recognizing that emerging questions become meaningful with time and exploration in practice, and addressing issues surrounding group membership. A good deal of the article attends to the role played by and the demands placed on the facilitator in a cooperative inquiry group.

Ryan, T. (2001). The Role of Leadership in Action Research. *Networks: An on-line journal for teacher research*, 4 (1). Retrieved January 11, 2002, www.oise.utoronto.ca/%7Ectd/networks/journal/Vol%204%281%29.2001may/article3.html

Ryan focuses attention on the role of leadership in action research. He joined four other teachers in an effort to restore and enhance professional confidence in the area of science assessment. He comments on his experiences as facilitator of the action research group and also on the experiences of the other participants in the group. The importance of challenging value positions in order to arrive at new positions is stressed. Change came about through reflection and discussion among the teachers who possessed varying levels of teaching experience. What had become familiar to the experienced teachers was examined more carefully because of the fresh perspective that a new teacher brought to the group.

Practitioners

Douglas, C. (2001). Using Co-operative Inquiry with Black Women Managers: Exploring possibilities for moving from surviving to thriving. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 14 (6). Retrieved January 11, 2002, www/bath.ac.uk/carpp/SPAR/CarlisDouglas.htm

Action research was used as a vehicle to shift power balances, deconstruct discriminatory systems and to design more equal and beneficial ways for people to relate. The group explored ways in which their protective habits of surviving influenced their choices. Issues surrounding avoiding control, abusing power, group membership and avoiding collusion are clearly articulated. The process of co-creating knowledge included attending to the knowledge contained in feelings and perceptions. A description of the challenges faced by the group include balancing structure and flexibility, focusing on the inquiry task, while also attending to the needs of individuals and the group for nurturing, care and safety, allowing space for others in the group to assume facilitation and leadership roles, and working with an emergent structure.

Lavell, M. (2000). If This is Empowering, Why Don't I Feel Better: An Aboriginal educator's perspective on action research as a strategy for facilitating change in Aboriginal education. *Ontario Action Researcher*, 3. Retrieved January 15, 2002, www.nipissingu.ca/oar/vol-3-2000/v332.html

Lavell contends that many Aboriginal people think and learn in a holistic fashion and view trial-and-error learning as wasteful and unproductive. Action research can often involve relying on a linear-sequential process, trial-and-error methods and journaling as a means to gather information. Lavell suggests that while action research can be a valuable tool for uncovering cultural perspectives through highlighting individual's experiences rather than seeking general rules that apply to all people, some of the characteristics of the action research process may make it less of a good fit for many Aboriginal people. Attention must be paid to cultural appropriateness when embarking on action research projects with Aboriginal people. Similar considerations to particular cultural ways of learning and expressing knowledge should be given to action research with individuals of other ethnic groups.

Rubas, J. (2001). Supporting Teachers by Listening and Learning: A consultant's action research project. *Ontario Action Researcher*, 4. Retrieved January 15, 2002, www.nipissingu.ca/oar/oarCurrIssue/V421.html

In this article, an education consultant describes how she used an action research project to inquire into her own practice of supporting teachers to engage in action

research. She stresses that reflecting on one's practice requires an understanding of what one believes. Through engaging in feedback/practice/reflection cycles, Rubas was able to gain new perceptions that assisted her to improve her practice. Rubas demonstrates that when you want others to make changes, the place to start is with yourself. She offers a few recommendations to facilitate open inquiry:

- include opportunities to evaluate process and interaction;
- structure convenient times for participation; focus on what should be replaced in the way people are working, i.e. what will a new idea or procedure take the place of and how will it make things better; and
- articulate your intentions clearly, openly and often.

Learning Communities/Communities of Practice

Calderon, M. (1999). Teachers Learning Communities for Cooperation in Diverse Settings. *Theory Into Practice*, 38 (2), 94-99

This description of teachers learning communities highlights factors important to building learning opportunities. In 45 minute weekly sessions, teachers got together to analyze efforts, share accomplishments, exchange strategies and learn what was needed to learn. The primary method for inquiry was cooperative learning strategies; teacher ethnography combined with the weekly and monthly sharing sessions. A week-long summer institute allowed participating teachers to explore issues further with researchers and cooperative learning facilitators. By creating bonds with other teachers, administrators and parents, teachers found they began to really "care about" their peers, particularly those from different ethnic or philosophical backgrounds.

Darling, L. (2001). When Conceptions Collide: Constructing a community of inquiry for teacher education in British Columbia. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 27 (1), 7- 22. Retrieved February 1, 2002, EBSCOHost database

Darling describes her attempts as a teacher educator to create a community of inquiry with a cohort of teachers in training and outlines a number of challenges she encountered. Darling acknowledges that one of the great challenges of a community of inquiry is finding a way in which inquiry remains open, critical and challenging without becoming disrespectful and hostile. In essence, to promote both compassion and inquiry at the same time. Darling found that while the student cohort community made it possible for students to pursue learning, learning happened alongside the community rather than being generated by the community. She concludes that the virtues of critical conscientiousness required by inquiry can be problematic for groups that have worked hard to support a caring and nurturing community.

Fischer, D., Mercado, M., Morgan, V., Robb, L., Sheehan-Carr, S. & Torres, M. (2000). The Curtain Rises: Teachers unveil their processes of transformation in doing classroom inquiry. *Networks: An on-line journal for teacher research*, 3 (1). Retrieved January 11, 2002, www.oise.utoronto.ca/%7Ectd/networks/ journal/ Vol%203%281%29.2000april/article1.html

This article was written by a group of teachers wanting to speak explicitly about the process of transformation they experienced through engaging in an inquiry project. These teachers describe how they moved from detachment and resistance early in the process and grew into an engaged "community of inquirers" who discovered unforeseen benefits of doing teacher-inquiry. They report that it wasn't until after they had observed some changes in their classrooms that they were able to see the value of the process. These authors suggest that personal transformation and the creation of a community of learners occurs through the process of inquiry as participants come to understand their work environment and their practice in ways which they were previously unaware.

Keating, D. (1999). The Learning Society: A human development agenda. In D. Keating and C. Hertzman (Eds.), *Developmental Health and the Wealth of Nations: Social, biological and educational dynamics*. New York, NY: Guilford Press

Keating claims that a learning society is characterized by mass participation in collaborative knowledge building in learning communities. A learning society would see reduced alienation and disenfranchisement and increase the breadth and depth of human resources needed to respond in the best way possible to rapid change. A learning society improves itself continuously in a dynamic, ever-renewing process while also continuously monitoring the health of its members so that knowledge about health can be incorporated into policy and planning.

Lindsay, A. & Mason, R. (2000). Focusing on Reflection with Early Childhood Practitioners. *Networks: An on-line journal for teacher research*, 3 (1). Retrieved January 11, 2002, www.oise.utoronto.ca/%7Ectd/networks/journal/Vol%203%282%29.2000sept/ article1.html

These authors focus on the forms and interests of reflection and reflective activity to help raise practitioners' consciousness about their practice. Working within the education system, the authors contend that while teachers may focus their reflections on the technical aspects of their practice, fewer use reflection to search for reasons for their successes and their failures. In order to do this, an ongoing dialogue between the practitioner's theoretical position and their practical experiences is needed. Meaningful reflection requires good facilitation and intentional efforts to make actions and understandings as explicit as possible. A four-phase protocol for guided reflective practice is offered.

Mazlovaty, N. (2000). Teachers' Choice of Teaching Strategies for Dealing with Socio-Moral Dilemmas in the Elementary School. *Journal of Moral Education*, 29 (4), 429- 445

This article documents the relationship between learning communities and teachers' abilities to engage in ethical practice. Social and personal values held by teachers accounted for the greatest difference between use of different strategies to address socio-moral conflicts in the classroom. A justice orientation and a realistic discourse orientation of professional morality are contrasted. The article confirms that learning communities can provide a forum for developing teachers' educational and social belief systems to enrich their ways of thinking about and competencies for dealing with socio-moral conflicts and generally effecting positive changes in their teaching practices.

Morrissey, J. (2000). Indicators of Citizen Participation: Lessons from learning teams in rural EZ/EC communities. *Community Development Journal*, 35 (1), 59-74

This article responds to a gap in the literature on community projects, suggesting that most concern themselves only with the scope of participation while neglecting to investigate the quality of participation. Framing community projects as learning teams, the authors investigated participation quality by examining types of participation, circumstances for participation and results created by participation. Effectiveness was based on determining the extent to which participation made management or government more responsive and accountable, and the extent to which it also contributed to participants' personal growth or efficacy. The characteristics of effective learning teams are outlined. Findings confirm that participation in participatory inquiry results in both instrumental and developmental gains for the community and its citizens.

Nias, J. (1991). How Practitioners are Silenced, How Practitioners are Empowered. In H. Letiche, J. van der Wolf and F. Plooij (Eds.), *The Practitioner's Power of Choice: In staff-development and in-service training*. Amsterdam: Swets & Zeitlinger.

Nias outlines the aspects of traditional knowledge creation and teaching practice that make the shift to practitioner-researcher difficult for teachers. The benefits that practitioner research accords teachers are also documented. Through teacher research, teachers gain practical wisdom that enables them to choose right action. The author also comments on the role of knowledge in affording power. Obstacles to conducting action research are outlined.

Wenger, E. (2000). Communities of Practice and Social Learning Systems. *Organization*, 7 (2), 225-246

Wenger outlines three modes of belonging (engagement, imagination, alignment) in communities of practice and suggests that groups should strive to attain balance among all three. Each mode of belonging contributes something different to a social learning

system and personal identities within the system. Wenger also proposes three dimensions of competence (sense of joint enterprise, relationships of mutuality, shared repertoire of communal resources) within a community of practice. The personal experience of knowing is acknowledged and learning is suggested to take place in the interplay between our experience and what is defined as competence in our social environment. Indicators of progress for each element of competence are offered to help communities of practice avoid not learning. Identity is proposed as being that through which we experience the world, and therefore, related to belonging and knowing. Organizational requirements and barriers to creating social learning systems are described.

Wesley, P. & Buysse, V. (2001). Communities of Practice: Expanding professional roles to promote reflection and shared inquiry. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 21 (2), 114-124. Retrieved January 18, 2002, EBSCOHost database

The article focuses on the impacts of reflective inquiry on special education practice in early childhood. Current practice is proposed to generally not include responsibility for analysing experiences and observations in conjunction with other practitioners in order to refine practice and contribute knowledge. The benefits of reflection are outlined as enabling practitioners:

- to sharpen their perceptions about the methods and approaches they employ in work;
- to rethink assumptions and understanding regarding familiar practices;
- to identify gaps between theory and practice;
- to contrast their practices with those of others in their field; and
- to become aware of discrepancies between their interpretations.

Four types of reflection are described. The authors propose that ideally, practitioners should be able to engage any one of the forms of reflection in situations as they occur. The evolution of learning organizational theory is outlined and contrasted with communities of practice and learning communities. Some means for developing a commitment to shared inquiry and differences between five models of collaborative inquiry are described.

Organizational Learning/Learning Organizations

Senge, P. (2002). *Creating Quality Communities*. [Electronic version] Retrieved January 22, 2002, www.sol-ne.org/res/kr/qualcom.html

Senge, the popular guru of organizational learning, describes what is needed to create quality learning communities. The article outlines how learning communities are characterized by the cultural norms of love, wonder, humility and compassion, shared

leadership and an acknowledgement that everyone is able to learn from each other. A focus on inquiry is reflected in questioning beliefs, assumptions and certainties. Senge maintains that in learning communities, what people know is less important than what they can learn. Penetrating questions are valued above simple answers. Senge stresses the importance of providing opportunities for people to practise performance in organizations. He concludes that learning involves much more than acquiring new information, new tools or a new understanding and it requires the support, insight and fellowship of a community.

Yanow, D. (2000). Seeing Organizational Learning: A 'cultural' view. *Organization*, 7 (2), 247-268

Yanow employs a cultural perspective to propose possible ways in which we might be able to "see" organizational learning. She argues that a cultural perspective enables us to view the collective aspects of learning through considering the situated meaning of language, acts and artifacts. This article describes several studies that reveal some of the ways in which practitioners communicate tacit knowledge. Yanow points out that learning is often more evident in the long run than it is in the moment.

Other Key Resources

Specific topics that appeared in the literature described above prompted perusal of other literature outside the specific focus areas noted above. A few references each on critical friends, imagination, an Ethic of Care, communicating across differences, child care workers' perspectives on research and mindful learning are below.

Critical Friends

Day, C. (1991). Only Connect...Relationships between higher education and schools. In H. Letiche, J. van der Wolf and F. Plooij (Eds.), *The Practitioner's Power of Choice: In staff-development and in-service training*. Amsterdam: Swets & Zeitlinger

Day introduces the notion of "critical friends" and their role in inquiry. Critical friends strive to reduce isolation in practice and increase opportunities for moving through stages of reflection and confrontation of thinking and practice. Day notes that reflection does not necessarily lead to confrontation and that self-confrontation requires skilled support to translate into action. He points to the importance of becoming theory-less for a period of time in order to assimilate or co-construct new theory. He acknowledges that the process of development and change is likely to involve discomfort, especially when people choose to immerse themselves in messy but crucial problems using experience, trial-and-error, intuition and muddling as inquiry methods.

Day, C. (1998). Working with the Different Selves of Teachers: Beyond comfortable collaboration. [Electronic version] *Educational Action Research*, 6 (2), 255-275

In his documentation of one teacher's action research project, Day contends that change involves non-rational, as well as cognitive processes. As a "critical friend" to the teacher who was the focus of the article, Day represents his role as teacher educator to be that of providing systematic feedback based on the fieldwork of the teacher. He states that critical friends can assist practitioners in the process of self-examination when they are not given the opportunity for systematic reflection on their practices, beliefs, values and contexts. Change, Day notes, is prompted only when practitioners perceive their personal solutions to problems to be inadequate.

Imagination

Subramaniam, B. (2001). Technoscientific Imaginations. *Feminist Studies*, 27 (2), 526- 531 [Electronic Version] Retrieved March 7, 2002, EBSCOHOST database

Subramaniam highlights the socially constructed nature of knowledge. She describes the reciprocal influences of science and feminist studies in her struggle to integrate the social categories of gender, race, nationality and sexuality into her work as an evolutionary biologist. Subramaniam acknowledges wanting to be considered both a scientist and a feminist and describes how she has come to see distinctions between a sense of belonging and disciplinarity. She reports that technoscientific imagination emerges through disrupting and examining epistemological theories and paradigms, prompting discovery of new possibilities and new meaning.

Thomas, N. *Dictionary of Philosophy of Mind – Imagination*. Retrieved March 5, 2002, www.artsci.wustl.edu/~philos/MindDict/imagination.html

Thomas provides a definition of imagination and a thorough account of the history of the concept of imagination from ancient to contemporary times. In this article, imagination is traced back to being something that was profoundly distrusted and in need of disciplined reason, to being associated with thinking about things that are not actually currently present to the senses. Later, imagination was represented as synonymous with ideas, and then moved to focus on its role in original, creative thinking, especially in the arts. More recently, imagination has been seen as thought based upon language rather than imagery, and most recently, as reflecting the "faculty that envisages possibilities."

Ethic of Care

Gregory, M. (2000). Care as a Goal of Democratic Education. *Journal of Moral Education*, 29 (4), 445-462 [Electronic Version] Retrieved March 5, 2002, EBSCOHOST database

This article begins with defining an ethic of care and then moves to propose six virtues (acquaintance, mindfulness, moral imagining, solidarity, tolerance and self-care) that

encompass such an ethic. Gregory draws parallels between the virtues associated with an ethic of care and democratic virtues. He outlines the behaviours that are associated with caring virtues (noticing, imagining, communicating with others, inquiring into and articulating the needs and interests of others, imagining the peculiar desires of others as belonging to ourselves, and broadening our exposure to human experience) and suggests that through their practice, practical, cooperative and social improvement emerges. He proposes that engaging in shared inquiry enables people to see others in their suffering and in so doing, come to care for each other.

Kaplan, L. (2000). *A Trio of Books Applying the Ethic of Care: Personal, institutional and global dimensions. Peace & Change*, 25 (4), 516-527 [Electronic Version] Retrieved March 5, 2002, EBSCOHOST database

In this review of three books, Kaplan provides a definition of the ethic of care and notes the ways in which each of the books reviewed reflects this theme. The review focuses on the books by 1) Oliner, P. & Oliner, S. (1995). Towards a Caring Society: Ideas into Action. Wesport, Conn: Praeger; 2) Eaker-Rich, D. & Van Galen, J. (1996). Caring in an Unjust World: Negotiating Borders and Barriers in Schools. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press; and 3) Reardon, B. & Nordland, E. (1994). Learning Peace: The promise of ecological and cooperative education. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. Kaplan suggests that all three books share a vision of caring as a conscious act of social responsibility. The practice of caring involves a struggle against unjust social forces that is motivated by a vision of power as a cooperative exercise. She maintains that an ethic of care should extend from personal relationships to all public and political activity in order to effect a global ethic of care.

Communicating Across Different Perspectives

Burbules, N. & Rice, S. (1991). Dialogue across Differences: Continuing the Conversation. *Harvard Educational Review*, 61 (4), 393-416.

These authors propose that several communicative virtues are critical to effective dialogue across differences. They contend that these virtues, acquired through practice in relationships, do not reflect a communicative style, but rather reflect a certain type of regard for the perspectives and self-expression of others. They caution that while dialogue can serve to reduce difference, it can also serve to maintain difference. They suggest that recognizing people's comfort zones can be a starting place for being able to move beyond operating at either end of a continuum (agreement and consensus versus irreconcilable differences). These authors stress that knowledge is always partial and incomplete and that people should be prepared to acknowledge that some problems are not solvable but only manageable.

Child Care Workers' Perspectives on Research

Eisikovits, R. (1991). The Child-Care Worker as Ethnographer: Uses of the Anthropological Approach in Residential Child and Youth Care, Education & Practice. In J. Beker & Z. Eisikovits (Eds.), *Knowledge Utilization in Residential Child and Youth Care Practice*. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America.

In this book chapter, Eisikovits describes why an ethnographic approach to practitioner research is a good fit for child and youth workers. Practitioner-research is stated to provide a forum for professional development and effecting changes in practice. Eisikovits describes stereotypical notions of research that child care workers may hold and the ways in which an ethnographic approach to research, using methods consistent with action research, can help to expand child care workers' perceptions of research and their role in creating knowledge.

Mindful Learning

Langer, E. (1997). *The Power of Mindful Learning*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books.

The concept of "sideways learning" underlines the need for a paradigm shift from the pervasive myths that undermine true learning to a mindful approach to learning. Myths that are proposed to stifle creativity, silence questions and diminish self-esteem in learners:

1. The basics must be learned so well that they become second nature.
2. Paying attention means staying focused on one thing at a time.
3. Delaying gratification is important.
4. Rote memorization is necessary in education.
5. Forgetting is a problem.
6. Intelligence is knowing "what's out there."
7. There are right and wrong answers.

In contrast, a mindful approach to learning activity involves the continuous creation of new categories, openness to new information, and an implicit awareness of more than one perspective. Langer contends that mindful learning acknowledges the conditional, context-dependent nature of the world and the value of uncertainty. "Sideways learning" aims to maintain a mindful state. In a mindful state, our basic skills and information guide our behaviour in the present, in a flexible and responsive fashion. The basics are repeatedly varied so that they tend to serve as a rough guide rather than a rigid formula. Mindfulness involves the psychological states of openness to novelty, alertness to distinction, sensitivity to different contexts, implicit, if not explicit, awareness of multiple perspectives and orientation in the present.

Theories and Assumptions in Child Development

by Judith Bernhard

Judith K. Bernhard, PhD, Fulbright Scholar, is a researcher, author and educator at the School of Early Childhood Education at Ryerson University in Toronto. She is interested in the development and education of those from immigrant and refugee children and families, particularly the Latin American community. Contact: bernhard@ryerson.ca or visit www.ryerson.ca/~bernhard.

In the past decade, there have been signs of basic shifts in child development theory and research. Looking back, we remember Gesell's age milestones proposed in the 1920s and Piaget's stages elaborated in the 1950s. Many early theories were based on children's progression from stage to stage until reaching maturity. In trying to attach meaning to children's actions, reference was often made to their "stage of development." These models often spoke of "the child" or "the adolescent," invoking a generic human being without gender, ethnicity, class or culture.

These ages and stages were derived from experiments conducted at laboratory schools of institutions like the Yale Clinic of Child Development. Although such research settings were populated by white, middle-class children of graduate students and professors, somehow it was assumed that these settings provided for the objective investigation of universal patterns of development. Gesell's charts and the School Readiness Test are still widely used in textbooks and in normative material guiding the interpretation of well-known psychological tests. Piaget, a Swiss, observed his own children.

Another feature of these older views was that class and social setting were often linked to innate deficits. Researchers tended to assume the universality of Western norms; the practices of other, so-called lower cultures, represented a deviation from or less developed form of the ideal. This assumption was made even in outreach programs for the poor, set up at major child development research centres. Differences were often seen as signs of innate capacities, or more exactly, innate *in*capacities.

Although the concepts of ages and stages may have once been useful, educators all over the world now question the value of applying such theories to increasingly diverse, multilingual,

multicultural societies. Helen Penn in 1999 echoed this concern, asking whether it is possible for milestones identified by US researchers in a US population to apply to the world population, when the US is only 5 per cent of the world's population.

The IQ test debate of the 1960s was one of the first signs that the old paradigm was breaking down. Dissenting investigators proposed that "intelligence" was not one thing or one underlying capacity. Intelligence, they argued, means different things in different contexts, and the use of standard assessment instruments is not only invalid but also actually harmful.

This coincided with increasing recognition of legal rights of minority groups — the resurgence of the feminist movement; the US civil rights movement and the adoption of official multiculturalism in Canada.

In psychology, those who follow Piagetian stages have allowed for many discrepancies, which further blurred the lines marking the stage transitions. Non-western investigators noted that most people in the world never reach "last" stage of Formal Operations, yet are able to lead satisfying, productive lives.

In anthropology, anthropologist Clifford Geertz in his famous 1973 essay "The Interpretation of Cultures" challenged various forms of universalism and began reasserting the primacy of culture in development: "We are, in sum, complete or unfinished animals who complete or finish ourselves through culture – not through culture in general but through highly particular forms of it" (p. 49).

In sociology, researchers increasingly questioned whether social sciences are based on objective facts like the natural sciences. Critical, phenomenological and hermeneutical approaches emerged in the 1950s to account for the mutual conditioning of social structures and *lived experience*. Feminists looked at women's lives as told in their voices and writings.

Building on such critical approaches, I propose alternative principles for the study of human development and give examples of what this change away from objective facts and universalism means for early childhood education. It is crucial to note that this is not an abstract debate, but one whose outcome affects our practice with children and families.

I am a migrant to Canada, a native born Chilean who has lived in Montreal and Puerto Rico. My research over the last 10 years has looked at the experiences of Latin American migrants, particularly as they interact with mainstream educational institutions. The

examples that follow, illustrating the consequences of questioning theories of child development, were gathered in the course of this research.

Liliana and Ricardo

Liliana, an immigrant from El Salvador, and her four-year-old son Ricardo, have been part of a child care centre in a large Canadian city for six months. She speaks about their situation:

> *When I bring Ricardo to the centre every day it is the same. I give him kisses and hugs, then the teacher takes hold of Ricardo's hand and tells me it is best to leave quickly. As I am walking toward the door, Ricardo breaks free of the teacher and runs to me so I stop to reassure him once again before finally leaving. Then I find out that Ricardo has stayed crying for over one hour after which he withdrew to a corner of the room until he fell asleep.*

Researchers and educators encounter such situations repeatedly; their likely response is shaped by the discourse that defines standards of "developmental appropriateness" — that Ricardo is not exhibiting signs of sufficient independence, so the teacher needs to work with him and his mother toward this goal.

I want to question this assessment and advice. Cross-cultural evidence suggests that the *types* of crises faced by children at different ages depend on the cultural expectations and norms of their world. It is one's culture that defines and provides measures of appropriate dependence and independence. New theoretical approaches recognize this as based on the cultural and contextual nature of all human actions.

Principle 1: Dominance

Knowledge of human development is socially situated and its production reflects the dimensions of social dominance. In any given society and historical period, there is always a struggle between modes of representing the world. The results of a power struggle determine the dominant representations that are accepted as "truth" as was pointed out by Foucault beginning in the 1960's. Bourdieu and Passeron, also working in France in about the same period, pointed out that educational institutions are charged with enforcing this "truth" and assessing children according to more or less arbitrary cultural standards. These views of power relations are discussed in the classic, *La Reproduction*.

Knowledge is produced within the dominant institutions. They act as gatekeepers for "truth." World-views of subordinated groups tend to be de-legitimized. Researchers from such groups often do not get funded and thus generally fail to produce publications acceptable to mainstream journals. Discourses representing "legitimate knowledge" reflect the dimensions of social dominance and flourish in mainstream journals. These dimensions include those based on class, race, sex and immigrant or aboriginal status.

Let's return to Ricardo. His mother came to visit at lunch-time. She reports: "I am feeding him and telling him stories about his grandmother, about when he was a little baby, things like that. Of course I speak quietly in Spanish so I won't bother anyone. Ricardo is listening to me and we both feel good. I notice the looks the teachers are giving me. I know they think I am spoiling him and not helping him to adjust to the child care centre."

The assessment of Ricardo, according to the dominant perspective, is based on such concepts as "secure attachment" and "autonomy," developed by Bowlby, Ainsworth and colleagues. An assessment tool would seek to determine whether Ricardo and his mother are exhibiting the appropriate signs. When the mother leaves, a sign of a "secure attachment" is for Ricardo to cry a bit, then get over it and focus on playing. If he does not cry, then a different label would be applied to him.

In Ricardo's culture, what is prized is the child's demonstration of affection and ties to the parents. However, in Canadian culture, this other view is not likely to be recognized; Ricardo is likely to be labelled immature and his mother over-protective. In institutions, all interpretations are not equal.

Monica

When Monica was two years old, her family emigrated from Nicaragua. Neither parent speaks English; their factory jobs require only its marginal use. Monica is seven years old now and in grade two. Over the past year, Monica has begun having difficulty in school. Her parents spend hours each day helping her with schoolwork.

During one of our interviews, her father said:

> *I would like to know how... what it is that Monica needs. Why in the report cards the teacher says she needs more math, more reading and at home, although we don't speak much English, we are always helping her in everything. She always does her homework and knows everything we ask her, but the report card always arrives as if she is failing.*

Monica's parents are proud to have brought up an obedient and respectful child who speaks good Spanish. They want Monica to succeed at school but it is clear that Monica is not headed for academic success.

Monica's teacher says: "She has difficulty with vowels in English as opposed to vowels in Spanish, and so being able to learn both the sounds in English and Spanish and to sound out words is difficult. And I think her home is almost entirely Spanish spoken [sic]... I'm not sure directly what sort of impact that has, but I think that may well make it more difficult for her to be picking up reading English."

The views of the school authorities, which will affect Monica's school outcome, have at least two components: that Monica is deficient in her performance; and that her parents' ability to support her is inadequate.

In light of the dominance principle, is Monica truly deficient academically? She is enrolled in an educational system where children are categorized according to their performance on arbitrary tasks. Because the system is geared to the needs and expectations of dominant groups, Monica will be harmed by a mainstream assessment. Listen to her expressions of discouragement:

> First I thought I was going to be a ballerina; then I thought I was going to be a singer; then I thought I was going to be a painter; then I thought I was going to be a doctor for people, then I thought I was going to be a doctor for pets; then I thought I was going to be nothing.

That Monica and her family are deficient is suggested by Monica's teacher: "You see Monica is a very diligent worker but she still is on the low average. I tried to explain to him that he didn't need to worry. Sometimes parents think that their kid is the worst in the class. She is not. Certainly there are other children who are at Monica's level. She's reading at grade one intermediate level. That's a year behind."

Although the teacher uses diplomatic phrases, he hints that Monica's parents do not really understand the situation and that he thinks they will be unable to help her. Monica's father, however, is quite willing to help. He believes his child can learn and wants to talk about specific ways of encouraging her learning. The teacher's message of "don't worry" negates these efforts.

In mainstream theory and assessment, Monica's "deficit" is attributed to her as an individual. Knowledge, when conceived in this manner, is something the individual

possesses, which is retrievable in larger or smaller quantities. By contrast, we see Monica relationally within a hierarchy of family, community and culture. We dispute her individual IQ score, constructed as her individual characteristic; instead, it mostly reflects her functioning on an English test in an Anglo environment.

Principle 2: Development is Contextual

Social and contextual analysis demands consideration of a number of dimensions and intersecting discourses. In one discourse, Monica is a child, a disadvantaged Latina immigrant. Within another discourse, she has a gender disadvantage. As well, we need to consider her class and race. Because of these intersecting positions of subordination, her development will likely be far from optimal.

A partial remedy for these situations is found in theories of Vygotsky, Lave and Rogoff, who understand learning as a feature of a social process, occurring among and between individuals in the conditions that bring people together. Other theorists, such as Annette Lareau, David Corson and Michael Apple have recognized the multiplicative effects of intersecting subordinations.

Principle 3: Multiple Paths of "Normal" Development

Proponents of one universal path of normal development claim to have identified particular developmental milestones. We assume, to the contrary, multiple paths with many different milestones according to cultural context.

Many mainstream researchers have begun calling for a degree of flexibility in judging according to universal milestones in considering what is "within normal range." But, as stated earlier, some investigators at the forefront of change question universal milestones entirely.

Monica's teachers will likely construe her as lagging behind and needing to catch up. Yet her future choices are not just deviations from the path — they have different potential. If her teachers continue to construe her as needing to catch up with the "next milestone," her struggles will take on the character of further academic and social difficulties. If Monica is viewed in terms of what is expected developmentally, she and her family will be made to feel inadequate and ultimately will give up.

I propose a multiple path analysis, according to which Monica is not behind because she is not on the same path. If we envision a tree whose interwoven branches represent different developmental pathways, then *a whole range of paths can be considered normal*. The branchings of the tree are not predictable in terms of individual psychology. So many possible contextual factors exist that we cannot know how a person will end up. At moments of branching, the most subtle contextual factors may play a key role.

As with the branches of a tree, at each moment, decisions or events take young persons on different pathways. Early events place constraints on the choices available later. Although there is less and less variability as one moves up the branches, the final destination of a particular branch is not definitively predictable. Someone can begin in branch A and still end up in the area of branch D.

Western mainstream discourse still emphasizes the "blossoming" of independence in four-year-old children. Thus, Ricardo is assessed as showing "dependence" on his mother. He is intertwined with her; letting mother feed him and such behaviour is pathologized and labelled "immature." This label implies that Ricardo, like Monica, is on the same path as everyone else but "delayed" nonetheless.

Conclusion

We need to rethink basic approaches to child development. I have suggested three principles that could be involved in a better science of development. It is time for theorizing within the field of ECE to undergo radical change — change that encourages the full development of all human beings from all racial, cultural, linguistic and class backgrounds. And it is time for change in practice.

References

Apple, M. (1992). The Text and Cultural Politics. *Educational Researcher*. 21(7) 4-11.

Bernhard, J. K., & Freire, M. (Forthcoming). "What is my child learning at school? Culturally contested issues of Latin American children and families?" *Canadian Ethnic Studies Journal*.

Bernhard, J. K., Freire, M., Pacini-Ketchabaw, V. & Villanueva, V. (1998). "Latin American Parents' Group Participates in Their Children's Schooling: Parent Involvement Reconsidered." *Canadian Ethnic Studies Journal*. 30(3), 77-98.

Bernhard, J. K., Freire, M., Torres, F., & Nirdosh, S., (1998). "Latin Americans in a Canadian Primary School: Perspectives of Parents, Teachers, and Children on Cultural Identity and Academic Achievement." *Journal of Regional Studies*. 19(3), 217- 236.

Bernhard, J. K., Gonzalez-Mena, J., Chang, H. N., O'Loughlin, M, Eggers-Piérola, C., Roberts Fiati, G., & Corson, P. (1998). "Recognizing the Centrality of Cultural Diversity and Racial Equity: Beginning a Discussion and Critical Reflection on 'Developmentally Appropriate Practice.'" *Canadian Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education*. 7(1), 81- 90.

Bernhard, J. K., Lefebvre, M. L., Murphy Kilbride, K., Chud, G., Lange, R. (1998). "Troubled Relationships in Early Childhood Education: Parent-teacher Interactions in Ethnoculturally Diverse Settings." *Early Education and Development*. 9(1), 5-28.

Bernhard, J. K., Lefebvre, M. L., Chud, G., Lange, R. (1997). "The Preparation of Early Childhood Educators in Three Canadian Areas of Immigrant Influx: Diversity Issues." *Canadian Children*. 22(1), 26-34.

Bernhard, J. K., Lefebvre, M. L., Chud, G., Lange, R. (1996). "Linguistic Match Between Children and Caregivers in Canadian Early Childhood Education." *Canadian Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education*. 5(2), 5-18.

Bernhard, J. K., & Freire, M. (1996). "Latino Refugee Children in Child Care: a Study of Parents and Caregivers." *Canadian Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education*. 5(1), 59-71.

Bernhard, J. K., Lefebvre, M. L., Chud, G., & Lange, R. (1995). *Paths to Equity: Cultural, Linguistic and Racial Diversity in Canadian Early Childhood Education*. Toronto: York Lanes Press.

Bernhard, J. K. (1995). "The Changing Field of Child Development: Cultural Diversity and the Professional Training of Early Childhood Educators." *Canadian Journal of Education*. 20(4), 415-436.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. C. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research in the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood.

Bourdieu, P. & Passeron, J. C. (1977). *La Reproduction*. London, UK: Sage.
Corson, D. (1993). *Language, Minority Education and Gender: Linking Social Justice and Power*. Toronto: OISE Press.

Corson, D. (1998). *Changing Education for Diversity*. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.

Foucault, M. (1972). *The Archeology of Knowledge*. London: Tavistock.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

Harkness, S. (1980). The Cultural Context of Child Development. In C. M. Super & S. Harkness (Eds.), *Anthropological Perspectives on Child Development*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Kessen, W. (1979). *The American Child and Other Cultural Inventions*. American Psychologist, 34(10) 815-820.

Lareau, A. (1989). *Home advantage: Social class and parental intervention in elementary education*. New York: Falmer Press.

Misra, G., & Gergen, K. J. (1993). On the place of culture in psychological science. *International Journal of Psychology*. 28(2) 225-243.

O'Loughlin, M. (1992, September). *Appropriate for Whom? A Critique of the Culture and Class Bias Underlying Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Education*. Paper presented at the conference on Reconceptualizing Early Childhood Education, Chicago, IL.

Penn, H. (1999). *Infant Care: a Review of Practice in Out-of-home Care for Children under Three*. University of Toronto: Child Care Resource and Research Unit.

Rogoff, B. (1990). *Apprenticeship in Thinking: Cognitive Development in Social Context*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Rogoff, B, Mosier, C., Mistry, J., & Goncu, A. (1993). Toddlers' Guided Participation with Their Caregivers in Cultural Activity. In E. A. Forman, N. Minick, & C. A. Stone (Eds.). *Context for Learning: Sociocultural Dynamics in Children's Development*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Rothstein-Fisch, C. (1998, November). *Bridging Home and School Cultures: Recognizing and Understanding Cultural Value Differences*. Paper presented at the conference of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Toronto, ON.

Super, C. M., & Harkness, S. (1986). The Developmental Niche: a Conceptualization at the Interface of Child and Culture. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*. 9, 545-569.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1987). *Collected Works: Vol. 1*. New York: Plenum.

Walkerdine, V. (1984). Developmental Psychology and the Child-centered Pedagogy: the Insertion of Piaget into Early Education. In J. Henriques, W. Holloway, C. Urwin, C. Venn, & V. Walkerdine (Eds.). *Changing the Subject: Psychology, Social Regulation and Subjectivity*. London: Methuen.

Contradictory Constructions of the Family Child Care Provider's Role

An Overview of the Ontario Experience

by Irene Kyle

Irene J. Kyle, PhD, is a researcher and consultant whose work focuses on child care, family resource programs, community development and related social policy. She is currently adjunct professor and research associate at the Centre for Research in Social Welfare, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary and a researcher Wood's Home's in Calgary, a multi-service children's mental health and family support agency. Prior to becoming a researcher, she worked for twenty years in a supervisory and administrative capacity in a number of child and family services, and was a Senior Policy Analyst for childcare with the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services. Recent publications include: Agency and Ethics: Family Day Care Providers' Perspectives on Quality (in press) Quality in Home Child Care Settings: A Critical Review of Current Theory and Research (2000); Towards a Framework for Integrating Child Care and Family Support Services in Toronto (1999); The Politics of Home Child Carework: Transcending Contradictory Public and Private Discourses (1998); Case Studies of Canadian Family Resource Programs: Supporting Families, Children and Communities (with Maureen Kellerman). Kyle was also principal author of the Ontario Report of the National Child Care Study (1992).

Although women have needed to turn to others for help with caring for their children as long as anyone can remember, only recently has the suggestion been made that placing children with neighbourhood caregivers should be the subject of public scrutiny and regulation. The history of family child care in Ontario (and elsewhere in Canada) is a history of how an informal exchange of supplementary child care – commonly referred to as "babysitting" – has gradually evolved into a public service, with more formalized requirements and heightened expectations for the care and education of young children.[1]

The transition in role from "day care mother" (as Ontario providers were originally called), to family child care professional has been a difficult one that has still not been accepted publicly, nor clarified in social policy or labour law. There continue to be serious differences in how policy makers, child care professionals, parents and providers themselves, view caregiver roles and the nature of home child care. There has been no agreement about the legal employment status of caregivers: should providers be treated as self-employed, as independent contractors or as employees with attendant rights and benefits? Some requirements under tax, employment and labour legislation are not only

inconsistent in their treatment of providers, but in some instances, contradict regulations about the operation of family child care set out by child care authorities. In many provinces/territories, current labour and employment legislation does not have categories that apply to home careworkers because caregiving has not typically been recognized as work. It tends to be viewed as an activity that is carried out in the private sphere and, therefore, not subject to public scrutiny.

While there have been differences in the way home child care providers' employment status has been treated across Canada, partly as a result of the way provinces have regulated and supported providers, there are a number of basic issues related to the provider role that are shared in common. To highlight some of these issues, in this paper I will consider how the provider role has evolved in Ontario, and explore some of the dilemmas that need to be resolved if the work of family child care is to gain proper recognition.

Historically there appear to be three different and contradictory constructions of the family child care provider role in Ontario. The first and dominant role has been the agency model developed by professionals and based on a child protection approach; the second has been the marginalized independent contractor (a model by default) continuing the informal tradition of babysitters. The third construction, that of employee, has only been flirted with superficially. Up to now, efforts to unionize providers and gain recognition of their status as public sphere careworkers with attendant rights and benefits (such as maternity leave or pay equity) have been largely unsuccessful because of the potentially serious threat to established funding arrangements and the continuing sense of home child care as an adjunct and private child care service.

The Dominant Construction: The Agency-Child Welfare Model

The role and status accorded to providers in the child welfare model was based on a deficit, child protection approach that saw providers not as coworkers and collaborators in the care and education of children, but as "surrogate parents" in need of professional supervision and education. Although originating in professional roles related to child protection in social work, this approach dovetailed nicely with early childhood educators' notions of professionalism and ideas about parent education.[2]

For example, in an early evaluation of the first family child care programs developed in Toronto, Willner, a consultant from the Child Welfare League of America, was critical of the way providers were viewed. He pointed out that "...another area of confusion resulting

from the adoption of a child welfare approach was a tendency to think of the day care mothers as substitute mothers, rather than as workers functioning in a professional or occupational role."[3] He noted that in setting fees paid to providers, the decision to match local rates paid by parents "suggests the tendency to think of the day care mothers as providing a fostering[4] or substitute mother service rather than functioning in a professional or occupational role."[5]

This deficit perspective of providers, reflected in many early statements about private home child care, made its way into various public documents and policy statements. For example, the 1973 Ontario provincial guidelines for private home child care explained:

> *... The day care mother will need a good deal of assistance and encouragement in programme planning, because by and large* ***the notions of child care which prevail in the average home in the community are custodial rather than developmental****, which is to say that care is concentrated upon the feeding and safety of the child with not much awareness of the cognitive, social and physical needs in the child's development.*[6]

The 1975 Advisory Council on Day Care Progress Report II discussion continued this perspective stating: "The quality of Private-Home Day Care Programs depends largely on the capability of the home visitor and the workload assigned."[7] In choosing to license agencies rather than providers, Ontario policy compounded the problem. It placed the responsibility for ensuring the quality of care, not with the carer, (i.e., the person with the power to make things happen in the care setting), but with a public agency that was removed from, but nevertheless was held accountable for the carework that took place.

Apart from the logistical difficulty of making the agency responsible for the quality of work it could only indirectly supervise, the child protection approach was (and is) problematic because of its patronizing treatment of providers. Family child care was not treated as "real" work but as a kind of add-on to mothers' unpaid carework. Because providers were seen more as clients than co-workers or colleagues, they were rarely given opportunities to take an active role in helping to determine the policies, programs and nature of home child care services. The child protection approach and the volunteer-surrogate-mother model it assumed also allowed agencies to gloss over other issues they would need to have addressed – such as salaries and basic benefits – if providers had been treated as workers.

By adopting this deficit-based approach, the Ontario model also failed to recognize the importance of providers' personal agency; that is, the intentionality, the personal initiative, motivation and variety of skills and experience that many providers bring to their work.

Although some home visitors may have made distinctions in relation to the providers they supervised, on the whole, providers were treated as though they belonged in a single careworker category. Virtually no provisions were made to recognize the skills and knowledge that individual providers brought to their work through prior education, training and work experiences, or through their current participation in community support programs or their actual caregiving experiences.

The Challenge of Unionization and Pay Equity

Unionization

Over time, increased agency involvement and professional interest in promoting quality child care, led to a move to improve the standard of care in agency-affiliated homes. The introduction of government regulations in 1978 moved Ontario family child care even further into the public sphere, through formalizing standards that more closely paralleled early childhood educators' expectations for planning children's activities, keeping records and sharing information with parents. Agency providers were subject to inspection not only by home visitors and government inspectors (who in latter years must follow a lengthy checklist of requirements), but also by other officials, including fire inspectors and public health nurses. Although the demands on agency providers increased, they continued to be paid as though they worked informally. This meant that government subsidies did not have to cover minimum wage or the usual employee benefits, such as employment insurance, vacation and sick leave, maternity leave and pensions.

Questions about providers' employment status first surfaced in 1985 when the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) applied to the Ministry of Labour on behalf of Cradleship Creche's providers (subsequently, Macaulay Child Development Centre) for union certification and recognition as employees. According to the draft Ministry report, The Future for Private Home Day Care in Ontario (1989), at that time OPSEU indicated that its goal was to unionize not only Creche providers, but providers from "all other agencies throughout Ontario."[8] In February 1986, the Ministry of Labour approved certification of the Creche providers, ruling that:

> *... the providers whom the union was seeking to represent were dependent contractors within the meaning of section 1(1)(h) of the Labour Relations Act and that by operation of section 1(1)(I), they were also employees for the purposes of the Act.*[9]

Around the same time, providers from Andrew Fleck Child Care Centre in Ottawa also initiated a unionization process. The Labour Board deemed them "dependent contractors"

and therefore eligible to become certified as a union. However, during the certification hearings, when it was discovered that some providers who had signed up were no longer working with the agency, the union was required to hold a second vote, at which time the providers who participated voted *against* joining the union.

Contract bargaining between the Creche and representatives from OPSEU began in July 1986; the first contract was not signed until July 1988. During this time, OPSEU also applied to the Employment Standards Branch for providers to be recognized as "Home Workers" under the Employment Standards Act (ESA), which would have made them eligible for minimum wage and for other statutory benefits such as CPP, UIC, maternity leave and vacation pay. In June 1987, the Employment Standards Branch provided an opinion that home child care providers were not employees under the ESA. As part of the bargaining process for a second Macaulay provider contract, OPSEU reapplied to the Employment Standards Branch for a review of providers' employment status. In February 1993, the earlier 1987 opinion was reversed and Macaulay providers were granted employee status.[10]

The union victory, however, was pyrrhic. Macaulay management argued that they could not afford to pay the costs of minimum wage and offer benefits to providers because of limited government funding. Their Board also expressed concern that if adopted, the financial impact of this change in employee status would result in the Macaulay program having to close down. Consequently, although they had been recognized as employees, the Macaulay providers settled for dependent operator status and were unsuccessful in changing the way they were paid for their work. However, they were successful in gaining a greater say in how they went about doing their work because in the process of negotiating a contract, providers were able to clarify a number of aspects of their rights and responsibilities.

Out of a concern for the potential impact the Macaulay providers' unionization might have on other home child care agencies, in 1987 the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services initiated a "Fundamental Review" of home child care to clarify a number of these issues. Although the draft report was never formally released, the Ministry recognized some of the contradictions in providers' employment status:

> *Up until the labour board hearings the Ministry and agencies had not given any serious consideration to the provider employment issue because they viewed the relationship [with providers] as a straightforward purchase of service contract with an independent business person... The government did not intend to force agencies, through legislation, into an employer/employee relationship. It is clear that providers in the regulated system receive low pay, no employee benefits, have little*

> *control over their work and are dependent on agencies... Although the issues for providers relate to stable, fair working conditions, the issues for agencies, government, and parents often revolve around the cost to provide a quality program and who pays for that service.*[11]

One of the most fundamental issues it raised was — what is the nature of carework and who should pay for it? Among the agency/government fears was that unionization would result in higher costs because providers would need to be paid minimum wage and benefits. This, in turn, could limit program flexibility because more children would have to be placed with each caregiver to offset the higher wage costs. With more children per home, the service might operate more like a mini child care centre, thereby changing the home-like aspects of care. Another concern was that because of the high staff/child ratio (relative to group care), family child care would become more costly, comparable to the higher rates required for infant centre-based care. Since few full-fee paying parents would be able to afford the costs of care, the program would become ghettoized, serving only subsidized children. Finally, employee status might mean having to compensate providers for overtime, for longer shifts, for meal costs and travel expenses (such as when they took the children on outings).[12] It is interesting that all of this analysis took place based on the assumption that additional funding would/could not be made available; similarly, issues of pay equity do not appear to have ever been considered.

Unfortunately, the public consultation promised as part of the Fundamental Review never occurred, so these issues were never formally discussed and resolved. The subsequent review of alternative models of home child care in 1994 by the Home Child Care Association of Ontario also attempted to address issues of provider role and employee status, but had limited impact. While the Ministry of Community and Social Services initially expressed a willingness to fund the development of pilot projects to test out a variety of new approaches, support for these efforts was cut when the Harris government came to power.

Pay Equity

Issues about employment status resurfaced in 1996 when three agency-affiliated providers in Wellington County (Carol Butler, Mary Spencer and Beth Leith) filed complaints with the Ontario Pay Equity Commission for the county's failure to include family child care providers in their pay equity plan. Once again the question of providers' employment status was a central issue. After months of hearings, the Tribunal decided that for the purposes of the Pay Equity Act, providers were employees of the County. In determining employment status, the Tribunal referred to the standard "four-fold test" of employee status that

examines the following factors: control, ownership of tools, chance for profit and risk of loss.

Because of the Day Nurseries Act regulations, the County home visitor was seen to exercise "a great deal of supervision and control over the way providers approached the care they gave to County children."[13] Further, because provider rates are set by the local government and agency-affiliated providers have no say in deciding what fees are charged to parents, they were seen to have little opportunity to make a profit. Providers also did not usually experience a "risk of loss" because of the common agency practice of collecting parents' fees and taking responsibility for unpaid bills. Finally, although the service takes place in a caregiver's home, the common agency practice of supporting providers by offering equipment such as strollers and playpens meant that providers did not have sole ownership of tools.

Wellington County subsequently appealed the decision of the Tribunal and the various hearings and appeals carried on for a number of years. In October 2001, a judicial review by the Ontario Superior Court of Justice took issue with the Tribunal's reasoning in a number of areas and found the providers to be independent contractors, not employees. In quashing the Tribunal's findings, the Justices identified a number of areas where providers have control over their work – such as setting their own hours, choosing to care for children privately and setting additional fees (e.g., late fees) – seeing this as evidence that providers were indeed, independent. While the issue of provider status related to this pay equity challenge now seems to be resolved, it is clear from the vacillation of the arguments that part of the underlying problem is the lack of a clear understanding of the nature of caring work and the need to create carework categories in employment and labour legislation that address the particular needs of careworkers who provide a public service, but work in the private sphere.

The Marginalized Majority: Independent Providers

The discussion so far has focussed on the employment status of agency-affiliated providers. The majority of family child care providers in Ontario are not affiliated with an agency and are subject to only minimal legislative requirements. This alternative independent operator/ entrepreneur is a model-by-default. Although it gives providers more freedom to control their working conditions, it is also a deficit model. Independent providers are subject to the same professional criticisms about their presumed lack of motivation, training and expertise as agency providers – but even more so. While independent providers are often criticized for the quality of their care, it is often forgotten that various support and training programs are

not widely available in a number of communities. The independent operator model also takes for granted caregiving in the private sphere by casting it in an entrepreneurial mode that overlooks the fact that home careworkers have many of the same needs as workers in the public sphere.

Although writing about the U.S., Tuominen's comments apply equally in Canada:

> *While family child care workers now sell their care-giving labor to the state, the state structures its compensation system (i.e., contracting-out) in such a way that these care-givers do not qualify for the benefits historically associated with white male, industrial, paid labour-Worker's Compensation, Social Security, retirement benefits. While providing care-giving services essential to the functioning of the welfare state, state policies deny these workers their full recognition as bona-fide workers and the full benefits historically identified with paid labor.*[14]

There is a growing body of research documenting this problematic treatment of women's carework across a number of sectors. This work considers issues concerning the exploitation of nannies and other domestic (home) workers and the lack of public provisions to recognize their needs, as well as the racial and class discrimination underlying the continuing neglect of their rights as workers.[15] Independent child care providers are in many respects a child care example of what Glazer has described as the work transfer process that is part of a larger neo-conservative economic trend to devalue and marginalize women's carework. The work transfer process involves the transfer of responsibility for carework from better paid, more highly-trained workers to lower paid, lesser-trained and lower status workers who work part-time or on a contract basis with few or minimal benefits.

Writing about health care workers, Glazer explains:

> *... while changes in the labour process in health services may be framed as cost-savings to "society," the changes are prompted by corporate attempts to accomplish two goals: (1) to further capital accumulation and increase profits, and (2) to shift the responsibility for social reproduction to workers and their families.*[16]

Glazer notes that the work transfer process is often justified on the basis that, in addition to saving costs, it will offer consumers more choice, convenience, and personal control. These justifications "are important because capital and the state, under cover of intermittent worldwide crises, use the work transfer as a short-term strategy to cut labour costs and social entitlements."[17]

Although the treatment of child care providers' personal agency differs across the various Ontario models, the lack of regard for and protection of their economic rights as workers is consistent. While unionization by workers in other fields has often successfully addressed these concerns, in the case of family child care providers, unionization has so far been limited to one community agency, and therefore, had only the most limited impact. Although the union helped give providers a greater say in how their work was organized, it was not successful in securing major changes in their remuneration.

Conclusion

Interestingly, many of these issues related to provider status are not unique to Ontario or Canada. Studies in the U.S.[18] and Great Britain[19] have also identified contradictions related to the role and status of caregivers and the ambiguous position they occupy in the social care system. The lack of resolution of these issues, in turn, translates into problems in developing funding, regulatory mechanisms and support services.

The failure to recognize care providers as workers and colleagues, and the expectation that women who work in their own homes caring for children should do it inexpensively, has meant that providers have had to privately absorb many of the costs associated with offering care. They have also had to make do without the kinds of employment supports and security available to most workers. Providers, in effect, have been, and continue to be expected to subsidize the real costs of providing child care for parents and employers. It is one of the supreme ironies that the important reproductive work they do is, at the same time, so marginalized and socially devalued.

Endnotes

1. This paper is based on material from Chapter 3 of the unpublished doctoral dissertation, entitled *Rethinking Carework in Home Child Care: Providers' Perspectives in Context*, of I. Kyle, University of Guelph, April 1999. This research was supported by grants from Family Day Care Services, Toronto, and from Women's Programs, Human Resources Canada.

2. Mayall, 1990; Shimoni, 1992.

3. Willner, 1967, p. 102.

4. Although this terminology is not used, payments to foster parents have traditionally been a form of honorarium; there has never been any treatment of their carework as formal work. Rather, foster parents are treated more as volunteers who, as part of their civic and charitable duty, help to care for unfortunate children. Payments were made not so much to recognize their work, but rather to compensate Although this terminology is not used, payments to foster parents have traditionally been a form of honorarium; there has never been any treatment of their carework as formal work. Rather, foster parents are treated more as volunteers who, as part of their civic and charitable duty, help to care for unfortunate children. Payments were made not so much to recognize their work, but rather to compensate them for some of the expenses associated with raising children. them for some of the expenses associated with raising children.

5. Willner, 1967, p. 102.

6. 1973 Ontario provincial guidelines for private home day care p. 7.23, emphasis mine.

7. 1975 Advisory Council on Day Care Progress Report II (p. 6)

8. draft Ministry report, The Future for Private Home Day Care in Ontario (1989), (p. 8)

9. MCSS, 1989, p. 8

10. Kyle, 1994

11. MCSS, 1989, pp. 9-10

12. ibid, pp. 6-7

13. Oldham, 2000, p. 4

14. Tuominen, 1995, p. 19

15. see for instance, Bakan & Stasiulus, 1997; Leach, 1996; Tuominen, 1995

16. Glazer, 1993, p. 214

17. Ibid, p. 212

18. Enarson, 1990; Nelson, 1991

19. Ferri, 1992; Owen, 1989; Poland, 1990

References

Bakan, A. B., & Stasiulus, D. K. (1997). Structural adjustment, citizenship, and foreign domestic labour: The Canadian case. In I. Bakker (Ed.), *Rethinking restructuring: Gender and change in Canada*. 217-229. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Enarson, E. (1990). Experts and caregivers: Perspectives on underground day care. In E.K. Abel, & M.K. Nelson (Eds.), *Circles of care: Work and identity in women's lives*. 233-245. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Ferri, E. (1992). *What makes childminding work? A study of training for childminders*. London, UK: National Children's Bureau.

Glazer, N.Y. (1993). *Women's paid and unpaid labor*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Kyle, I.J. (1994). *Building options for home child care in Ontario: Exploring alternative models*. Toronto, ON: Home Child Care Association of Ontario.

Leach, B. (1996). Behind closed doors: Homework policy and lost possibilities for change. In I. Bakker (Ed.), *Rethinking restructuring: Gender and change in Canada*. 203- 216. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Mayall, B. (1990). The division of labour in early child care – Mothers and others. *Journal of Social Policy*. Vol 19, 299-330.

Ministry of Community and Social Services, Ontario. (no date, circa 1973). *Private-home day care guidelines*. Toronto, ON: Author, Children's Services Bureau.

Ministry of Community and Social Services, Ontario (1975, June). *Progress Report II. Advisory Council on Day Care*. Toronto, ON: Author.

Ministry of Community and Social Services, Ontario (1989). *Fundamental review of private home day care in Ontario*. Unpublished study, circulated as a draft to members of the advisory committee and community representatives.

Nelson, M. (1991). A study of family day care providers: Attitudes toward regulation. *Child and Youth Care Forum*. Vol. 20, #4, 225-242.

Oldham, B. (2000, March 16). *Report to Family Day Care Services, Clarifying Providers' Employment Status*. Toronto, ON.

Owen, S. (1989). The unobjectionable service: A legislative history of child-minding. *Children and Society*. Vol. 4., #2., 367-386.

Poland, F. (1990). The history of a 'failed' research topic: the case of childminders. In L. Stanley (Ed.), *Feminist Praxis: Research, theory and epistemology in feminist sociology*. 80-90. London, UK: Routledge.

Shimoni, R. (1992). *Endemic ambiguity: The role of caregivers in relation to parents of children in day care*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Calgary, Department of Educational Policy and Administrative Studies.

Tuominen, M. C. (1995). *Reproducing and challenging gender norms: Racial/ethnic communities, class relations, and the transformation of child-care labour In the welfare state*. Paper presented to the ASA Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., August 1995.

Willner, M. (1967, February). Report on family day care of children: An essay review. *Child Welfare*. 46, 100-103.

Understanding Family Support Programs*

by Suzanne Smythe

Suzanne Smythe is an adult and family literacy educator and researcher based in Vancouver, BC. She is currently working toward a Ph D in family literacy, with a particular focus on the relationships between mothering, early literacy development and social policy. In 2001, under the auspices of FRP Canada, Suzanne conducted a two year research project on literacy in Family Resource Programmes, which resulted in a practitioner resource guide entitled Weaving Literacy into Family and Community Life.

This resource is designed for child care and family advocates who want to educate staff, organization members, policy makers and funding agencies about the theories, principles and practices of family support work. The document addresses five common questions about family support programs:
What is a family support program?
How do family support programs work with families and parents?
How do family support programs work with children?
How do family support programs work with communities?
How do family support programs promote quality in their work?

What is a family support program?

Family support programs are community-based organizations that support families in a variety of ways. They are known by various titles and terms depending on the region in which they are located. These include: family (or parent-child) resource centre; family place; family centre; maison de la famille; and maison des parents. Family support programs may be free-standing organizations or linked to a school, community centre, child care program, women's centre, neighbourhood house or native friendship centre. Programs operate out of many different venues including community centres, churches, schools, apartment buildings and even shopping malls. Although their funding sources may come

* The term Family Resource Program (FRP) has been widely used in Canada. Recently, the term family support program has been adopted as many feel it more accurately describes what the programs do. This document will use the term family support program, except when the term family resource program appears in the title of a cited resource.

from unique sources, CAPC/CPNP projects (Community Action Program for Children and the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program), Early Years Centres in Ontario, Military Family Resource Centres and Neighbourhood Houses also come under the umbrella of family support programs.

Family support programs have strong grassroots origins. They are often informal in structure and driven by community members who organize around a particular concern or issue, such as access to health care information or educational toys for children, prenatal care or the desire to break down the social isolation experienced by many parents. The programs and services offered by family support programs vary according to community context and available resources. As a family support program grows, it may expand its services and formalize its structures, but the values of mutuality, democratic participation and responsiveness to local issues remain important.

Recent research describes the theories, principles and practices of family support work.

Malcolmson, J. (2002). *Putting the Pieces Together: A Conceptual Framework of Family Support Practice.* Ottawa: FRP Canada

This document is the product of national consultations and research in the family support field in Canada. The framework describes relationships among key elements of family support work and sets out a definition, guiding principles and examples of family support activities. The conceptual framework provides the following definition of a family support program:

> *Family support programs are community-based organizations working with children, families and caregivers to enhance strengths, to build capacities and to promote healthy development.*

Family support programs deliver a range of services guided by principles that focus on building supportive relationships, facilitating growth, respecting diversity and furthering community development.

Family support programs vary depending on their size, mandate and resources. Services are flexible, accessible and offered in an informal atmosphere. These services may be provided in partnership with other groups. Family support services include:

- child development
- community development
- community outreach

- counselling and mediation
- drop-in programs
- early learning and care
- educational upgrading
- employment assistance
- family literacy
- food and nutrition support
- parent and caregiver support
- parent education
- peer contact and mutual support
- play and recreation
- promotion of health and safety
- referrals to other resources
- toy lending

The guiding principles of family support are:

1. Family support programs are open to all families, recognizing that all families deserve support.
2. Family support programs complement existing services, build networks and linkages, and advocate for policies, services and systems that support families' abilities to raise healthy children.
3. Family support programs work in partnership with families and communities to meet expressed needs.
4. Family support programs focus on the promotion of wellness and use a prevention approach in their work.
5. Family support programs work to increase opportunities and to strengthen individuals, families and communities.
6. Family support programs operate from an ecological perspective that recognizes the interdependent nature of families' lives.
7. Family support programs value and encourage mutual assistance and peer support.
8. Family support programs affirm parenting to be a life-long learning process.
9. Family support programs value the voluntary nature of participation in their services.
10. Family support programs promote relationships based on equality and respect for diversity.
11. Family support programs advocate non-violence to ensure safety and security for all family members.
12. Family support programs continually seek to improve their practice by reflecting on what they do and how they do it.

Kyle, I. and Kellerman, M. (1998). *Case Studies of Canadian Family Resource Programs: Supporting Families, Children and Communities*. Ottawa: Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs

This book of case studies is the first in Canada to document the work of family support programs. The Case Studies resource describes theories and concepts that are common to family support programs. These are:

- *The ecological model of human development*
- *Social support*
- *Social capital*

The Ecological Model of Human Development

Bronfenbrenner, Urie. (1979) *The Ecological Model of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

The most succinct way to describe the essence of the ecological model is to quote John Donne: *"No man [sic] is an island."*

Bronfenbrenner identified four contexts, or systems for human development. The relationship among these systems is ecological – they are interdependent and interconnected. Individual experience and development is shaped by the factors within each system and the relationships among the systems.

The micro-system: The setting in which the child directly participates such as the family, child care setting, school.
The exosystem: The systems that shape the immediate (micro) system such as the neighbourhood, parents' working lives, health and education services.
The macrosystem: Broader cultural and social values, political ideologies and practices that are often represented in social policy.
The mesosystem: The interaction within and between each of these systems. For example, the interaction between homes and schools (meso-system) may be very positive, which contributes to a more cohesive neighbourhood (interaction between meso-system and exo-system). The opposite may also be true.

From the perspective of family support work, the significance of the ecological model is the need to work with children and families in a holistic manner. This means paying attention not just to individual behaviours of a child or parent, but to the broader context of the individual's life: home life, school or child care, the neighbourhood, work, and the broader values and attitudes of society.

There is a connection between the ecological model and the concepts of social support and social capital. All three assume a dynamic connection between the individual, the family and the environment in which they live.

Social support

Social support is defined by Dunst (1985) as the forms of socializing agents that include, but are not limited to the family, neighbourhood, religious organizations etc. The following resources describe forms of social support vital to families and the role of family support programs in mobilizing social supports for families.

Dunst, C. (2000). Rethinking Early Intervention. *Topics in Early and Special Education*. Summer, 2000, Vol. 20, Issue 2, p. 95

Dunst distinguishes between informal and formal social support. Informal supports include the family, neighbourhood, religious organizations and so on. Formal supports are those offered by professional organizations and "experts," including counselling services, education programs etc. While formal supports provide important resources to families, it is informal supports that most positively relate to family, child and parent functioning.

Thus, family support programs strive to mobilize families' existing informal supports or to help families create new ones.

Social capital

Another key concept that is important to family support work with communities is social capital. This term is associated with French philosopher Pierre Bordieu. The term captures the idea that social connection, social activity and social bonding have value for individuals and for society. The following sources expand on this idea and connect social capital to the work of community-based organizations such as family support programs.

Putman, R. (2001). Social Capital: Measurement and Consequences. *ISUMA*, Spring

Putman's main point is that social capital in the form of social bonds, social connectedness and social involvement in communities leads to reciprocity. According to his preliminary research, this seems to be positively linked to many other factors such as success in schooling, more citizen involvement in local issues, lower crime rates, higher quality of life for children and healthier people. The value of social connection is in feelings of reciprocity that people share for one another.

Woolcock, M. (2001). The Place of Social Capital in Understanding Social and Economic Outcomes. *ISUMA*, Spring, pp. 11-17

According to Woolcock, "the basic idea of social capital is that one's family, friends and associates constitute an important asset, one that can be called upon in a crisis, enjoyed for its own sake, and/or leveraged for material gain" (p. 12). Woolcock argues that poverty is a function of exclusion from these assets and other bases of power in society such as government, the economy, the media for example. The implications of this for community organizations is that it is not enough just to "reach out" to poor or isolated communities; it is necessary to help them to "scale up" by forging alliances and relationships with people and institutions (such as local governments, schools, public health systems) that *have* power.

These views on social capital relate to family support work in two ways. First, by working to mobilize social networks and providing a context for social connection, family support programs are important engines for building social capital in families and communities. Second, by finding ways to link families to institutions of power such as schools, health care systems and so on, family support programs address the processes of marginalization and exclusion that contribute to poverty.

How do family support programs work with families and parents?

Families are diverse. An important principle of family support programs is to embrace the diverse structures and strategies that families use for raising their children. While most program participants are biological parents and their children, family support programs include as parents all those who have a significant relationship with the child. These can include adoptive parents, foster parents, grandparents, child care providers, teachers, relatives, friends and neighbours. The following perspectives inform family support work with parents.

Developmental perspectives on parenting

Family support programs view parenting as a learning process. Parents' skills, knowledge and insights develop in concert with their children's development. The following source elaborates on the developmental perspective on parenting. This perspective acknowledges that individuals begin their parenting lives at different emotional and social places, which are shaped by current circumstances as well as personal and family histories.

Dunst, Carl (1995). *Key Characteristics and Features of Community-Based Family Support Programs*. Commissioned Paper II. Chicago: Family Resource Coalition

Dunst describes three key features of the developmental perspective on parenting.

First, it emphasizes the important role of parents as nurturer "and the capacity for parental growth and development" (p. 11).

Second, parents' capacity as nurturers is determined by features of the family support network, characteristics of the neighbourhood and community supports and other factors such as life experience, materials resources and so on.

Third, it is important to acknowledge existing parenting knowledge as starting points for building confidence and competence: all parents have strengths.

These three features guide family support programs in working with parents as adult learners, who have a wealth of experience to share and the capacity to continue to learn and grow.

Educational approaches for working with parents

Smythe, S. and Weinstein, L. (2000). *Weaving Literacy into Family and Community Life*. Ottawa: Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs and the Movement for Canadian Literacy

Smythe and Weinstein identify three main approaches family support programs adopt when working with parents. It is important to note how these approaches reflect family support program guiding principles, and the belief that all parents have skills, knowledge and strengths they can share with others.

Experiential learning

Experiential learning is a theory of learning that recognizes that people learn from experience, and from reflecting on experience: connecting new understandings to existing ones. Brenda Hall, a coordinator of a family support program in the North West Territories, calls this "gentle learning" According to Brenda, gentle learning involves taking advantage of a teachable moment such as an incident, event or discussion topic to help participants make connections between their experiences and new ideas. This approach is in keeping with an ethos of collaboration and mutuality where staff members are not experts but facilitators and co-learners. Many family support staff use the experiential learning cycle in their work with families. This cycle was first developed by Kolb (1975), and now takes many forms. The stages in the cycle are:

1. Describing the learning experience;
2. Reflecting on the experience: what did we/you notice?
3. What does this mean to us/you?
4. How can we/I/you learn from this? How does this experience apply to us as a group/as individuals?

Modeling

Family support staff model ways of interacting with children and adults that are respectful and that create opportunities for open sharing, for language development and positive discipline. Parents and caregivers learn from this modelling in ways that connect with where they are in their own development.

Empowerment

Paulo Freire (1972). *Education for Liberation*. New York: Routledge

Empowerment is hard to define, but as Dunst (2000) points out, people know it when they see it. Empowerment education is based on the theories of Paolo Friere, among others. Freire believed that education that respects people's experiences and knowledge and involves people in identifying and solving their own problems, can lead to social change. Many community-based organizations, including family support programs, have adapted and built upon Freirian ideas in their education work with parents and communities.

Respecting values

Common to these three approaches to learning is respect for the values that families and parents bring to their parenting. Each family brings its own history and experience to the role of parenting, and their values stem from these. While a culture or community may share certain values, no two families have exactly the same sets of values. Thus, family support work is not about changing people's values, but helping people to recognize the values that they do hold and the impact of these on their parenting decisions.

How adult learning approaches come together in work with parents

Herman, S. and Marcenco, M. (1996). Parents' perspectives on quality in family support programs. *Journal of Mental Health Administration*, Spring 96, Vol. 23, Issue 2, pp. 156-160

This study summarizes approaches used in family support programs that parents felt were very successful. The findings highlight that education approaches need not involve formal teaching, but rather experiential learning, modeling and empowerment.

Herman conducted focus groups with 300 parents who participated in family support programs that assisted them in dealing with their children's disabilities. They asked them about the practices that they felt were most effective in working with parents. The most common answers were:

- *Process*. Respect, focus on relationship-building, feeling of belonging and connectedness with staff and other parents.
- *Opportunities to network with other parents*. The empowerment learning models helped parents to realize that valuable knowledge and resources existed within the group and that support was there for them.
- *Accurate and timely information*. It was important for parents to get accurate, clear information, in good time, to help them make their own decisions.
- *Access to services*: The lack of barriers to participating in programs, such as user fees, bureaucratic red tape such as referrals, wait lists and criteria for participation made it easier for everyone to feel they belonged and wanted to be there.

The responses reflect adult learning approaches described above, and also highlight parent views of quality in family support programs. This is the topic of section V.

How do family support programs work with children?

The concepts described above – the ecological model, social support and social capital – are as important to working with children as they are to working with parents. Below are some additional concepts and approaches family support programs use in working with children.

Child development

Family support programs adhere to principles of child development and design learning for children and families that reflect these principles. The following sources articulate child development principles as they relate to family support work:

Guy, Kathleen, A. (1997). *Our Promise to Children*. Ottawa: Canadian Institute of Child Health

This book reviews the latest findings in human development and early brain development research. The authors identify four factors that are essential to children's optimal development:

- *Protection from harm and neglect*. this protection is needed from conception to adulthood and ranges from proper nutrition to protection from emotional and physical abuse.

- *Quality relationships*. "Children's developmental potential is supported or diminished by the care and attention they receive from parents, teachers, neighbours, friends, family members"
- *Opportunity and hope*. Children and young people need opportunity to play, to learn, to share their ideas and their feelings, and to have a sense of hope for the future.
- *Community*. The families in which children grow need support networks, services and social cohesion. This can be brought about by equitable distribution of wealth, fair decision-making practices and responsive governments.

Family support programs promote child development for example through:
- parent education about child development;
- language development programs such as singing and story telling;
- facilitating play groups;
- modelling and educating parents about co-operative discipline

Early brain development

Recent technological developments have made it possible for scientists to study the developing brain as it responds to its environment. They have found that the brain is a social organ that responds to conditions in its environment, and that there are sensitive periods between the ages of 0-6 years that shape children's social, emotional and cognitive development in important ways. The findings have broad important implications for the work of family support programs, for child care programs and for social policy. In many ways, they confirm scientifically what family support programs and the people who started them in grass roots settings have known for some time: children need loving, stimulating environments and families need a range of social supports to provide these. The following resources are just two among many that outline the implications of early brain research for family support work.

***Nourish, Nurture, Neurodevelopment: Neurodevelopmental Research, Implications for Caregiver Practice*. Ottawa: Canadian Child Care Federation and the Canadian Institute of Child Health**

This kit was put together in an effort to make the findings of early brain research easier to understand and apply to the daily lives of children and families. The resource is written for parents and caregivers of young children in early child care settings. The kit provides practical information, including resource sheets, posters and a summary of research findings, on four key elements that promote early brain development: breastfeeding, healthy attachment, responsive care and protection from harm.

McCain, M. N. and Mustard, Fraser, J. (1999). *The Early Years Study: Reversing the Real Brain Drain*. Final Report. Ottawa: The Canadian Institute for Advanced Research

This study summarizes recent findings in neurological science (the study of the developing brain), and the implication of these findings for supporting early childhood development in homes, communities and in social policies. The researchers note that there are sensitive periods of brain development in the early years, periods in which adequate and appropriate stimulation is necessary to create "pathways" to further cognitive, social and emotional development. The report notes that at the same time as we are recognizing the importance of nurturing and protective environments for children in the early years, families are experiencing unprecedented stresses related to work, income and parenting. Among its recommendations, the report underscores the need for family support services to address and alleviate stressors, and the need for education on a community level about the developmental needs of young children.

Promoting Resiliency

Howard, S. and Johnson, B. (2000). What Makes the Difference? Children and teachers talk about resilient outcomes for children "at risk." *Educational Studies*, Vol. 26, Issue 3, p.321

The concept of resiliency is tied to both Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development and to a strengths-based approach to child development. According to Howard and Bruce (2000), rather than focus on the deficits of children living in difficult circumstances, research into children's resiliency is focused on the assets and strengths that contribute to children's competency. A question that researchers of resiliency ask is: What makes "at risk" children apparently immune to the factors that negatively affect others? (Howard and Bruce, 2000, p. 322).

Howard and Bruce's research suggests that characteristics of resilient children are social competence, problem solving skills, mastery, autonomy, and a sense of purpose and a future. Factors in the environment that support these characteristics are:

- An ethos of care in schools and community organizations in which everyone is seen as having a stake in the well-being of all children;
- Respectful and ongoing communication between homes and schools;
- The consistent presence of a caring individual in the child's life.

Family support programs promote resiliency by offering education and recreational programs to all children and families, by promoting an ethos of care among individuals and community organizations, and by educating the public about child and family issues. These strategies are also important in supporting and strengthening communities.

How do family support programs work with communities?

The implications of Bronfenbrenner's model is that "it takes a whole village to raise a child." Three concepts that are important to family support work in communities are:

- *Promoting safe and cohesive neighbourhoods;*
- *Asset-based community development; and*
- *Community collaboration.*

Promoting safe and cohesive neighbourhoods

It is widely believed that communities, and more specifically, local neighbourhoods, strongly shape parenting practices and children's development, particularly as children grow older. This is linked to the concept of resilience described above. Children who live in neighbourhoods that promote an ethos of care for all children will be more resilient to the effects of other difficult circumstances in their lives. The following sources represent research on the importance of neighbourhoods.

Brooks-Gunn, J., Duncan, G. and Aber, J.L. (Eds). (1997). *Neighbourhood Poverty: Context and Consequences for Children*, Volume 1. New York: Russell Sage Foundation

The authors of this volume report on longitudinal and multidisciplinary studies of neighbourhood influences on children at various stages of their development. They found that although family characteristics remain a powerful predictor for aspects of child development, the neighbourhood shapes parenting experiences in important ways, such as social support available to parents, the effects of low vs. high income households in the neighbourhood, and availability of resources and education. Neighbourhood characteristics also became important for child outcomes at the time of transition to school, and in early adolescence. This research suggests the importance of building mixed-income neighbourhoods offering a variety of resources for families, and of paying particular attention to family needs at times of transition, such as Kindergarten/Grade One entry and early adolescence.

Asset-based community development

"Strengths- and asset-based models evolved in response to the increased recognition that building on strengths, interests, preferences, and so forth is a more productive approach to affecting behavior change than are efforts directed

primarily toward correcting weaknesses or alleviating deficits (Benson, 1997; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993)." - Carl Dunst, 2000, p.5

An important part of family support work is to find out about, and build upon, positive initiatives and capacities already present in a community. The following resource articulates this "asset-based" approach to community development.

Kretzmann, J. and McKnight, J.P. (1996). *Building Community from the Inside Out.* Chicago: ACTA Publications

These authors distinguish between the knowledge and solutions that arise from "needs-focused" development and "capacity-focused development." A "needs" perspective focuses on problems in a neighbourhood and the deficiencies of those who live there. Solutions seek to address these needs and deficiencies by providing services from outside. The result is often short-term, fragmented initiatives that have very little impact on the main issues facing a neighbourhood. "Capacity-focused development" focuses instead on the "capacities, skills and assets of lower income people and their neighbourhoods" (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1996, p.3). This approach recognizes that significant community development takes place only when members are committed to the process and willing to be involved in creating solutions. It focuses on the issues and abilities of local people, and on building relationships between and among local residents, associations and institutions.

Collaboration

Family support programs strive to enhance rather than replace what is available in the community. Working with existing organizations is important for the following reasons:

- It is more cost effective;
- It allows projects to combine their resources and skills to better work with families;
- It reduces barriers to access;
- It promotes a holistic perspective of family life by linking education, health, child development, community and economic development, and other factors central to family well-being.

In *Case Studies of Family Resource Programs* by Kyle and Kellerman (1998), the authors describe the range of organizations with whom family support programs collaborate. These include:

- Child care centres
- Employment and job search programs
- Literacy organizations
- Community colleges

- Libraries
- Local small businesses
- Cultural centres and community centres
- Elementary schools
- Women's centres
- Public health departments

And many more…

The following resource describes the collaborative activities of family support programs and the values that underlie them.

Smythe, S. and Weinstein, L. (2000). *Weaving Literacy into Family and Community Life, Book Five: A Literacy Workers' Guide to Family Resource Programs*. Ottawa: Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs

- *Examples of collaborative activities*
  Examples include: sharing space; staff training; co-writing funding proposals; co-developing and offering literacy and employment programs; providing in-kind services such as child-care and snacks; running a community kitchen; story time or family drop-in; offering counselling services in exchange for use of an office or meeting space, etc.

- *Values guiding family support program partnerships*
  - Agree not to compete for funds, clients or contracts with non-profit organizations doing similar work. Rather, strive to complement and enhance existing initiatives.
  - Understand that programs and services belong to the community, not to individual organizations.
  - Be willing to "let go" of a program and see it grow and change in another setting.
  - Be committed to reaching the "hard to reach" without targeting or stigmatizing certain groups.
  - Work hard to build trust among partners;
  - Follow an enhancement (asset) model: Focus on abilities and capacities that families already have.

How do family support programs achieve and maintain quality in their practice?

There are three main strategies for promoting quality in family support programs:

- *The development of a quality practice framework*
- *The formulation of a staff training and development strategy*
- *Program evaluation*

A quality practice framework for family support work

Malcolmson, J. (2002). *Putting the Pieces Together: A Conceptual Framework of Family Support Practice.* Ottawa: FRP Canada

As described at the beginning of this document, the family support field has developed a framework to promote quality practice. The quality practice framework identifies important ingredients for promoting quality in a family support program. These include:

- A definition and a set of guiding principles that speak to the values and assumptions underlying family support work;
- An emphasis on practices that reflect the guiding principles;
- An emphasis on reflective practice (thinking critically about our work as practitioners);
- A commitment to evaluation: both ongoing and summative, with an emphasis on the feedback and experiences from participating families.

Staff training

Kellerman, I. and MacAulay, J. (1998). *Training needs assessment project: Report on a national survey.* Ottawa: Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs

Family support programs consider training and development to be one of the most important ways to ensure quality in their programs. The researchers in the training needs assessment project undertook focus groups and interviews with family support workers from across Canada. Respondents said that although they take part in a range of short-term, professional development workshops to promote quality in their practice, the main barriers to training and development are: . the lack of available funding for training;

- inadequate staff to release people for training; and
- a lack of programs offering formal qualifications.

The barriers to staff training and development identified in this resource are addressed in the following document.

Smythe, S. and Malcolmson, J. (2002). *Staff Education, Training and Development.* Ottawa: FRP Canada

Smythe and Malcolmson report on interviews and consultations with family support workers across Canada, noting that respondents favour training and education opportunities that will not create professional hierarchies between themselves and the families with whom they work. They also want a training and development plan that does not exclude community workers who have life experience but not necessarily formal qualifications. Staff point out

that just as parents learn by reflecting on their experience, so too do workers. Thus, it is important to recognize experiential learning along with "formal" learning.

With these issues in mind, the family support field is calling for a training strategy that includes a range of options including short and long-term training, in-service training and more structured programs leading to credentials. Possible models include train-the-trainer, partnerships with college and university departments, support and expansion of the existing Ryerson Family Support certificate, models for recognizing and accrediting prior experience, and short term, in-house training.

Evaluation

As described earlier, program evaluation is an important way to promote quality in family support programs. Evaluations show that staff members are accountable for their work, and they provide an opportunity to involve participants in shaping quality practices that reflect family and community values and interests. Program evaluation has also become a key tool for funders in tracking the outcomes of family support work. The two documents reviewed below underline the evolving thinking about the relationships between appropriate evaluation methods and program quality.

Ellis, D. (1998). *Finding our way: A participatory evaluation method for family resource programs*. Ottawa: Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs

This resource promotes a view of evaluation that is based on the notions of success shared by program participants, rather than just outside agencies. The author emphasizes the importance of ongoing evaluation (collecting information during programs) and the involvement of staff and participants in deciding on what an evaluation should focus on and the methods that should be used. Issues of power and confidentiality are positioned at the centre of evaluation process. The author recommends ways to share results with the participants, the funders, the community and so on. This sharing is vitally important in promoting ownership and community involvement.

Schorr, L. (1997). A New Focus on Results. *Common Purpose: Strengthening Families and Neighbourhoods to Rebuild America*. New York: Anchor Books and Doubleday. pp. 115-140

The author documents the rise in popularity of "outcomes-based" evaluation, and considers some of the benefits and drawbacks of the approach for family support programs. The author argues that outcomes-based evaluations can benefit family support programs in three ways. They reduce the need for rigid bureaucratic regulation, the goals of a program can

become more transparent and thus better supported by the community, and clearly stated outcomes can provide staff and participants with a clear idea of what they want to attain. Some drawbacks to outcomes-based evaluations include once again the issue of power. Who decides what outcomes are appropriate for families and communities to work toward? How are these often personal and long-term outcomes best measured? Many people who work in human services ask, "Why should we have to prove to hostile critics that our work is valuable?" (p. 135). The author suggests that if there is democratic participation in the development and measurement of outcomes, the results could be greater public interest in the welfare of children, families and communities.

Notes

CANADIAN CHILD CARE FEDERATION
383 Parkdale Avenue, Suite 201
Ottawa, Ontario
K1Y 4R4
Telephone: (613) 729-5289 or 1 800 858-1412
Fax (613) 729-3159
E-mail: info@cccf-fcsge.ca
www.cccf-fcsge.ca

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

[X] This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

[ ] This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").

EFF-089 (1/2003)

PS031148